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CHALLENGE

41

The Magazine of Science-Fiction Gaming

TWILIGHT: 2000
The Village

D. Acre

SPACE: 1889
**The Puzzle
of the Shard**

Loren K. Wiseman

2300 AD
Macrocombat

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GDW: 1984. ISBN 1-55878-026-2. 96 pages.....\$15.



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P.O. Box 1646
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Managing Editor
Loren K. Wiseman

Associate Editor
Timothy B. Brown

Spiritual Advisor
Marc W. Miller

Art Director
Michelle Sturgeon

Graphic Design and Production
Steve Bryant
Kirk Wescom
Angela Bostick

Text Processing
Julia Martin
Julie Amdor

Interior Artists
Tim Bradstreet
Rick Harris
Tom Baxa
Larry McDougall

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CHALLENGE

The Magazine of Science-Fiction Gaming

Twilight:

The Village 2000

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D. Acre

Players help establish a little piece of civilization in the face of approaching chaos. This generic village environment can be used in Europe, Iran, and the United States.

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The Puzzle of the Shard

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ICERIVER

Iceriver Guards Chapter

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John A. Theisen

New Coventry, a hostile and frigid world on the edge of the galaxy near the Imperium's frontier, can best be described as a cross between extreme arctic wilderness and a Death World.

MEMO

[Handwritten signature]

From the Management

Let me share with you one basic facet of futuristic RPG design—the question of Earth's futuristic history. Most characters are going to be humans, and we all came from Earth. The problem put to the designers is this: What will happen to the Earth that will make it a more interesting role-playing environment?

Let's face it. Modern-day Earth is getting more peaceful by the decade. We should thank our lucky stars, of course, and whether this is due to the nuclear umbrella, greater wisdom among society's leaders, or just plain good luck is someone else's debate. All I know is that I haven't had to fight in a major war, my father didn't, and the way things look, neither will my children. The trouble spots of the world are getting fewer and fewer as it makes less and less sense to make war as a way to enforce state policy. Again, whether this is a lull or a trend, you tell me.

But a peaceful world is a boring world—from a role-playing point of view, anyway. Let's all be businessmen or sports heroes enjoying the fruits of a world community. Yeah, right.

It is the designer's job to create a future history which will turn up the chaos knob from 1 to about 9. Let's look at some examples.

In *Car Wars* and *Dark Future*, governments have simply broken down so that bloody highway battles are the rule of the day. In *Twilight: 2000* a Third World War blows everything away to make for warlords and soldier kings. Subsequently in **2300 AD** the world gets back on its feet but finds among the stars an alien race bent on humanity's destruction. In the new *Shadowrun* game (reviewed on page 74), magic makes its reappearance after a 50-century vacation, turning the entire world topsy-turvy as dragons meet heavy artillery in North America.

The trend is a simple one—make the games interesting by turning the world into a living nightmare. If you're wondering why many games have no "peaceful" applications, or why those that do often try to make your characters pick up guns anyway, it's because the stuff of adventure is, for the most part, violent and never pretty. Chaos is generally more interesting than order, that's all.

—Timothy B. Brown

The Village



Players help establish a little piece of civilization in the face of approaching chaos. This generic village environment can be used for parties in Europe, Iran, and, with modification of names and military situation, the United States.

By D. Acre

The player characters require a place to winter, or a firm base, or a safe place to allow members of their party to recover from injuries or wounds. Basically, the village can serve as a link between adventures or can be a starting point for new adventures.

LOCATION

The village should not be located near a major road, nor should it be located in the middle of a forest or in the mountains. It may have a railway line nearby which has been abandoned since the nuclear phase of the war. The referee should create a map of the village based on the description in this article.

THE ENCOUNTER

Members of the party are travelling along a trail near dusk when they see a young girl (15 to 17 years old) lying on the trail ahead of them. She is wearing a dress that looks like it has been torn by bushes; she is shoeless, and her feet are bleeding. When the characters stop to examine her, they can see that she has received a superficial bullet wound to her upper right arm. She is barely conscious due to exhaustion and loss of blood. As the characters bandage her, she will regain enough strength to tell them that they are in danger and ask them to take her to the village. It is important that the party stop, so if none of the player characters want to, an NPC should suggest it.

THE STORY

The girl tells the party her name, Maria, and states that she was kidnapped by bandits while working in the fields near her village. She and 11 other villagers were seized before the village militia could intercede. They were taken to an old factory where they were imprisoned in a compound. Over the next two days, they were joined by other prisoners—villagers and refugees who surrendered to these well armed and numerous bandits. On the third day, 10 prisoners were taken from the compound, and a short while later, those left behind heard thumps quickly followed by a whistling noise and explosions. Then they heard machineguns firing. All this happened out of sight, but, needless to say, the remaining prisoners were terrified.

The next day, Maria was among the 10 prisoners selected. They were led to a field behind the factory and told that they would be free if they could reach the far end. Behind the prisoners were three men in a pit, grouped around a "cannon" (really a 120mm mortar). The gunners then raised a "shell" to the mouth of the cannon and told them to start. As the prisoners started to run, she heard a thunk, then a whistle, then she saw an explosion midway down the field. The explosion wasn't that big, but she saw a large cloud of smoke. The prisoners closest to the smoke started choking. She held her breath and ran to the woods to her left, clawed her way through some barbed wire, and ran away. She didn't notice that she had been shot until she was well away from the factory area.

Twilight: 2000

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Basically, someone is testing the effectiveness of poison gas. This research is being conducted under the auspices of a larger organization that does not want its enemies to know that it is capable of manufacturing such weapons. This organization could be tailored to fit the location of the campaign, so it could be DGB, CIA, New America, or the Margraf of Silesia, the point being that it is a covert operation. Due to the covert nature of the setup, the player characters will not find any indication of the sponsor—identification marks on the vehicles have been erased, and soldiers are wearing a wide variety of uniforms. For our purposes, the village is in Poland.

THE FACTORY SETUP

If questioned, Maria can describe the location of the factory and other basic information. However, she is not a trained observer and will make some errors in the description. For

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example, the armored car will be described as a tank and the mortar as a cannon, and she will not know the number of men in the weapons pits. She will also state that no bandits are bivouacked in the factory itself.

If the player characters decide to conduct a reconnaissance, they will determine the following information.

- Sentry dispositions:
 - Three men in each PD position.
 - One man in the turret of the BDRM 3.
 - Two men at the door of the factory.
 - One man walking between the various sentry posts and buildings.
- They estimate a total of 30 marauders.
- The off-duty marauders sleep in the two-story factory office building.
- The other buildings seem to be used for storage.

ENCOUNTERING THE VILLAGE

If the players have not taken Maria to her village yet, they should now do so, as the defenses of the factory are too formidable for the average party to take out. As the characters approach the village, they will note that with the fields surrounding it, it has good fields of fire but is also quite exposed to incoming fire. They will also note that the village has escaped the ravages of war.

When the characters are about 50 meters from the village, they will be stopped by a sentry. He will ask them to state their business and will be wary of strangers. He is about 17 years old and armed with a double-barreled shotgun. When he sees Maria, he will become very animated and yell to the villagers that it is okay—they found Maria. He will escort the party in.

Upon reaching the village, the sentry will lead the party to the town hall and will instruct someone to get Lech and the doctor. He will aid the party in bringing Maria inside and making her comfortable, all the while asking her questions about her ordeal. Maria is very tired, and someone in the party should step in and tell him what they know. After a short wait, two men will enter, and any villagers who followed the party in will be told to leave. The older of the two men will tell the sentry to go back to the post.

The younger man will immediately check the extent of Maria's wounds and, if required, will rebandage them. He is the village doctor (in reality, a medic with a Med skill of 80%). The older man will introduce himself as Lech, the mayor of the village. He will question the players about their background and will ask them about their encounter with Maria.

If the players have not scouted out the factory, he will request that they do so. He will also ask their aid in freeing what villagers remain as prisoners. He will tell the party that the village can supply about 20 men to aid them, but they do not have heavy weapons. These men are his most experienced, and most have spent some time in the army. He has little to offer the players except the hospitality of the village. They would be able to stay on as part of the militia, and, if the harvest permits, he may be able to provide them with some

alcohol to fuel the vehicles in the spring. He would like to see the factory destroyed, as the village would not be safe if the marauders decided to use poison gas against them in retaliation for freeing the prisoners.

THE PLAN AND ATTACK

The party should be able to approach and conduct a good reconnaissance of the objective if they have not already done so. Lech will ask to go with them and will discourage any other villagers from accompanying them. He will explain that he served in the airborne branch, and his Recon skill will allow him to move with the party without increasing the chance of it being detected. He will suggest that the main militia party carry any heavy weapons and meet them in a clearing in the woods about one kilometer from the factory.

The players can suggest a plan for the assault, and the referee should consider whether it is realistic. If it is too risky, Lech will suggest the following plan.

A party of 15 militia, led by Lech and equipped with two RPGs, will crawl to the edge of the woods to the east of the armored car. Once in position, they will take out the sentries in front of the factory, the armored car, and the PK post north of the factory. They will also position two snipers to cover the northern and eastern sides of the factory office. Once their objectives are destroyed, they will escort the prisoners to safety.

The player characters, augmented by five militia, will position themselves at the northwest corner of the gap, where they can fire on the mortar position, and the southern and western sides of the factory offices. They will also be responsible for taking out the PK post at the southwestern corner of the gap. The factory offices are about 70 meters from their position, well within rifle, grenade, RPG, RAW HE, RAW HEAT, M203, and machinegun range. The effect of such a barrage of explosives on the surprised occupants of the offices would be quite devastating. Of course, survivors will probably have to be cleaned out with grenades and bayonets, but the approach to the offices should not be too dangerous if the characters use the other buildings for cover.

This plan allows for maximum use of surprise and overwhelming fire power to demoralize and destroy the enemy. If the enemy is not expecting an attack, the plan should be rather successful. If, however, the reconnaissance party got involved in a firefight with the enemy, the marauders will be wary and have at least one party of 10 men sweeping the woods, and will post extra sentries and man the mortar pit.

FORCES

Forces for the militia and marauders are as follows.

Militia: One Elite NPC (Lech) with one RPG and four rockets; four Veterans with one RPG and three rockets, two AK-74s, and one M16; eight Experienced with four Mausers and four AKMs; seven Green with three shotguns and four Mausers with 30 shots each. Each Veteran has one grenade, and Lech has two smoke grenades.

Marauders: 10 Veterans, 10 Experienced, 10 Green, all

armed with AK-74s. Each has two grenades. They also have a total of two PKs, one 120mm mortar, two RPGs, and a BRDM3, all well supplied with ammo. Those men not on duty are relaxing or sleeping in the factory office building.

THE AFTERMATH

Once the attack is over, the wounded treated, and prisoners set free, Lech will interrogate any surviving marauders prior to ordering them killed. They will not be able to tell much except to say that they were hired by Captain Wojowski, and he's dead.

If any of the players object to the killing of the surviving marauders, Lech will ask them if they could think of a better way to ensure that whoever is behind this project won't be informed about the attack.

Lech will instruct his men to gather up all the equipment and weapons. This will be loaded on the captured trucks and transported to the village, which will take two trips. The booty consists of three military trucks, two PK machineguns, two RPG 16s, one 120mm mortar, 30 AK-74s, office supplies, 400 kilograms of domestic food, cooking supplies, 20 jerry cans, a small chemistry lab, various tool sets, a small machine shop, 10 belts of 30mm ammo, six cases of 5.45mm ammo, four cases of frag grenades, 250m of barbed wire, 60 120mm HE mortar bombs, 18 RPG HEAT rockets, a surgical kit, four doctors' medical kits, four 2km hand radios, 40 sets of webbing with sleeping bags and gas masks, clothing, a small still, and eight cases of 7.62mm bloc (belted).

The three unused buildings will contain most of this equipment as one was used for storage, one as a chemistry lab, and one as a maintenance garage. The weapons and webbing will come from the dead marauders, the wire from the woods, and the office supplies and sleeping bags from the factory offices.

The militia will also find 20 yellow painted mortar bombs in the lab, and Lech will insist that they be destroyed. This can be accomplished either by firing them into a vacant field, making sure the wind is blowing away from the firing point, or by digging a deep hole, placing the bombs and some explosives at the bottom, and, after covering the hole, setting off the explosives. This is an ESY:CBE task. The BRDM will also be cut off and used. If the damage was less extensive, the vehicle could be repaired. The referee should note that if the office building was set on fire during the battle, a certain amount of the equipment would be destroyed.

Twilight: 2000

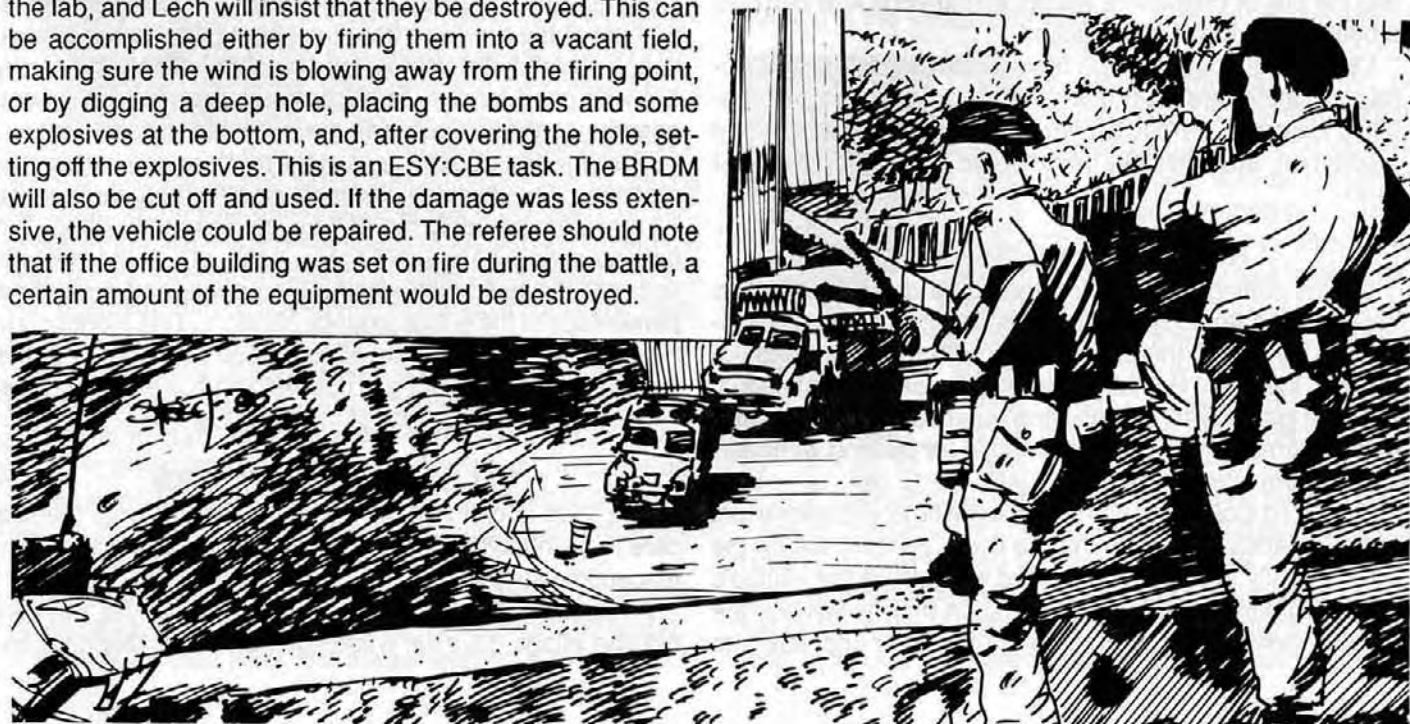
ACCEPTANCE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE VILLAGE

If the attack was successful and the characters got along with Lech, they have established their usefulness to the village. Lech will honor his offer of food and shelter to the characters. He will give them a brief history of the village and offer them positions in the militia. With the weapons they have just captured and the leadership of the player characters, the security of the village will be significantly increased.

RECENT HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

Before the war, the village was a minor market for the farmers of the region. The district school, the district bureaucracy, and the local market were all located in the village. The shops catered to the farmers who lived within five to 10 kilometers of the village. Apart from the service-based industries, the only other major employer was a small food-processing plant, where local produce was canned, preserved, or, in the case of potatoes, bagged.

The town also contained a movie theater, a community hall, a church, and a small inn. The town didn't grow too fast due to its isolated location, but it was, to the locals at least, an important center of the area. When the war broke out, the community was allowed to continue to exist as it always had. The farmers continued to produce food, and the factory packaged it and loaded it on the trucks the government sent.



A few of the merchants received draft or call-up notices and went off to join their units, but the majority of the population was engaged in "protected" jobs and thus was relatively immune to callups. As the war progressed, the village received fewer and fewer messages from the government. Gasoline and fertilizer became scarce, and the farmers returned to the use of horses or oxen for plowing and transportation. The villagers whose jobs became redundant became a pool of labor for the fields.

The village was never occupied by any of the armies, but foraging parties for the various armies appeared periodically, and the village gave them what they demanded. About a year ago, a band of deserters came to town and took hostages. They ruled the village harshly, killing people without reason, attacking the women. Some farmers banded together to remove the deserters, but their attempt failed, and many villagers were killed in reprisal.

About a month after the deserters took over, Lech came home. He had been the manager of the factory before the war and had been called up. He served in the airborne forces, but after two years of constant combat and the virtual destruction of his unit, he decided to return home. His wife was one of the hostages, and a farmer told him of the situation in the village as he approached it. The first night he was back, during curfew, he somehow entered the community hall, killed seven deserters he found there, freed the hostages, and by daylight was stalking the remaining four deserters who fled to the woods. He returned by evening, carrying four extra weapons.

Lech will not go into detail about how he killed the deserters. He will state that "he dealt with them." If the player characters ask the villagers about the incident, they will state that he killed all the deserters silently, moving through the shadows and returning covered in the blood of the bandits. The villagers regard Lech's actions as almost supernatural, and the player characters will not find anyone who can give a better description of the action.

Lech sought out and held trials for any voluntary collaborators. If they were guilty, they were executed. He also organized the militia, formed a town council, rationalized the food production, and basically became the guiding force for the town.

ROLE OF THE PLAYERS

Lech is getting very weary of the multitude of tasks he has taken on. He would like to spend more time on food production, as well as on the development of some light manufacturing in the town. He has plans to form some sort of mutual defense pacts with neighboring villages and towns, and maybe some sort of common market for dealing with merchants from outside the area.

He is also looking for some soldiers who could relieve him of the defensive tasks so that he could concentrate on the other equally important tasks that will ensure the village's long-term survival. It is for that reason that he will ask the highest ranking or most mature of the player characters to

become captain of the militia. He is not worried about a possible takeover by these soldiers as the militia is composed of villagers who would not turn on their own. He will, however, become wary if the player characters start recruiting a large number of outsiders into the militia. If he interprets this action as a possible bid to take over the town, he will intercede and exile the foreigners without their equipment. That is, however, a worst-case option. Lech will support the player characters and become a very reliable friend as long as they don't plot against the village.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of the village is 188, divided into 61 households. An exact breakdown is found in the Occupation and Demographics by Household Table on page 10. This should allow the referee to provide more background to the players.

THE ECONOMY

The primary occupation of the village is food production—grain, corn, and vegetables are grown. There is also a dairy industry, pork, and some sheep. Each farmer is responsible for a portion of the land outside the village and owns the produce from the land. The cattle and swine are kept in the village, and the care of the herds is the responsibility of the village government. In addition, each household has its own vegetable garden. Draft animals are mostly privately owned, but the village has a pool of oxen and horses that can be rented by the farmers for a nominal fee. The village stores the food over the winter, recording how much each farmer contributed. If there is a surplus, the village acts as a broker in trade with merchants.

The village council is responsible for providing medical care, day care, and schooling for the children, as well as for paying for the standing militia, the factory workers, and the small council bureaucracy. For these services, the village charges a tax of 20 percent of all grain produced and 40 percent of the products from the herds (milk, cheese, pork, beef, and wool). In this way, food production is maximized by allowing good farmers to become relatively wealthy, while ensuring that basic services are available to all.

The only other businesses in the town are the inn/bar, the mechanic, the vet, the blacksmith, and the merchant/broker. All these are privately run and pay taxes to the village. The one exception is the broker, who conducts all the negotiations for the town with visiting merchants and receives a percentage of the goods to stock his store. This monopoly in dealing with outsiders allows the village to get better prices as the visiting merchant can deal with no one else and, thus, cannot undercut the price of the village goods.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

The town doctor and his assistants provide free medical care to all inhabitants to the extent of their ability and pharmaceutical supplies.

As about 25 percent of the population is under 14 years old, the village pays the wages of the various teachers and

day-care workers who look after the children while the parents are at work. These teachers are either prewar teachers or the best qualified villagers.

The old factory is the site of the village industries, which includes a mill, a large still to make methanol, cheese-production facilities, meat preparation (smoking, salting), and the conversion of animal and human wastes to fertilizer. In addition, saltpeter is collected from the waste and used to make gunpowder.

The standing militia is a force of 20 villagers who form the core of the village's defense. While the farmers go armed into the fields and assist in sentry duties at night, the standing militia patrols the area, mans the heavy weapons, supervises the armory, escorts wood-gathering parties, and acts as the police force. As the standing militia members are free of the food-production duties, they are able to be trained year-round, as opposed to the farmers, who can be trained only during the winter. The militia headquarters is located in the basement of the town hall.

PERSONALITIES

The following are important NPC personality descriptions.

Lech Stravinski

Born in a major city, Lech is not a native of the village. In fact, he only came to the village 10 years ago, upon completion of his management degree. He started as the assistant manager of the factory but was quickly promoted after proving to be an excellent organizer and planner. He increased production through the use of incentives and by reducing labor strife. He also involved himself in municipal affairs and, despite being a "foreigner," became one of the village's most influential citizens.



Due to his prior military service (he had been an officer in the special forces before getting his degree), he was called back to the army upon the outbreak of the war. He will not speak of his service during the war, but he saw much action. In 1999 he realized that the war was over, with no government to direct the military. Thus, he disbanded his unit and left for home.

After killing the deserters who had taken over village, he found himself de facto mayor of the village and reorganized it in order to improve its chances of survival. He has many plans to diversify the economy of the village, to make alliances with other villages, and to implement other plans that would improve the chances of the village surviving the approaching dark ages.

What he doesn't have is the time to carry out his plans unless effective and qualified subordinates can be found.

Lech is an Elite NPC and always carries a hidden Skor-

pion SMG in a shoulder holster. He also has a silencer for it, which he keeps at his home. Lech is an excellent leader who is motivated by the desire to ensure the survival of the village.

Victor Kowalski

Victor is the innkeeper of the Plowman's Rest. He is a large man, around 45 years old, and has been in charge of the inn since his father died almost 20 years ago. Due to his virtual monopoly on nightlife in the village, he is one of the best-informed people in the village.

Victor has two small stills in a shed behind the inn where he produces vodka and whiskey. He also brews small amounts of dark beer. His wife does all the cooking for the patrons, and his children help in serving food, cleaning the rooms, and tending the bar when Victor is otherwise occupied.

Victor is one of Lech's greatest supporters due to his agreement with Lech's goals, as well as the fact that Victor had his leg broken for refusing to serve the deserters when they controlled the town. Victor still walks with a limp from that experience.

Victor is an Experienced NPC who is loyal to Lech and his goals.

Adam Karovitch

Adam is the village storekeeper, probably the wealthiest man in the village. He is about 55 years old and can always be found in his shop. A shrewd bargainer, he negotiates in the name of the village with all outsiders. Due to his monopoly of access to the produce of the village, he does extremely well in his negotiations. He is able to stock his store from his portion of the profit made, as well as from the proceeds of negotiations for goods not considered essential for the survival of the village (and thus not supervised by the council).



Adam also profits from kickbacks provided by the outside merchants in exchange for better deals. The council is not aware of this as the kickbacks and reduction in profit are not that large. Adam resents that the most useful trade items (food, alcohol, ammo) are so strictly controlled and is attempt-

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Occupation and Demographics By Household

<i>H</i>	<i>Adults (M/F)</i>	<i>Children (M/F)</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Adults (M/F)</i>	<i>Children (M/F)</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
1	21/21	—	Militia, childcare	33	55, 22/48	13/—	Farmer, farmer, militia
2	23/20	—	Militia, childcare	34	36, 76/36	16/2	Farmer, farmer
3	32/28	—	Factory, factory	35	56/46, 27	7/—	Farmer, farmer, militia
4	24/22	—	Militia, factory	36	57/55	14/23	Farmer, farmer, militia
5	27/25	—	Militia, factory	37	35/43	7, 10/—	Mayor (L. Stravinski), childcare
6	37/30	—	Blacksmith, teacher	38	55, 57/—	—/23, 27	Merchant (A. Karovitch), assistants
7	57/56	—	Mechanic, teacher	39	49/48	13/26	Farmer, farmer, nurse
8	63/61	—	Armorer, childcare	40	43/46	—/17, 10	Farmer, farmer
9	61/56	—	Farmer, farmer	41	52/47	14/21	Farmer, farmer, militia
10	64/65	—	Factory, childcare	42	42/45	—/5, 10	Farmer, farmer
11	66/65	—	Clerk, librarian	43	51/47, 21	9/12	Farmer, farmer, herdsman
12	70/65	—	Farmer, farmer	44	37/35	3, 5/8	Farmer, farmer
13	72/67	—	Farmer, farmer	45	42/38	—/17, 11, 19	Farmer, farmer, militia
14	73/69	—	Farmer, farmer	46	36/35	7, 2/5	Farmer, farmer
15	78/75	—	Farmer	47	52/42	17, 10/13	Farmer, herdsman
16	27/24	—	Militia, factory	48	45/43	20, 12/14, 22	Farmer, farmer, militia, herdsman
17	26/25	—	Militia, factory	49	42/39	22, 2/4, 12	Farmer, farmer, militia
18	29/24	—	Militia, factory	50	43/—	—/18	Veterinarian, assistant veterinarian
19	33/30	—	Farmer, farmer	51	—/46	—/14	Teacher
20	35/33, 78	15/—	Militia, childcare	52	—/36	—/8	Town clerk
21	31/23	4/—	Farmer, farmer	53	—/39	17/12	Farmer, farmer
22	37/34	17/—	Farmer, farmer, militia	54	—/42	13, 18/13	Farmer, farmer
23	37/36	—/10	Militia, herdsman	55	20/—	—	Militia
24	55/35	—/14	Farmer, farmer	56	24/—	—	Herdsman
25	46/34	10/—	Farmer, farmer	57	33/—	—	Doctor (C. Harris)
26	42/39, 79	—/17	Farmer, farmer, factory	58	32/—	—	Priest
27	40/37	10/—	Farmer, farmer	59	—/26	—	Nurse
28	27/26	2, 5/—	Farmer, farmer	60	27/—	—	Herdsman
29	35/34	16/4	Farmer, farmer	61	29/—	—	Militia
30	42/38	7, 12/—	Farmer, farmer				
31	57, 22/49	14/18	Farmer, farmer, militia				
32	43, 19/37	19/12	Innkeeper (V. Kowalski), assistants				

Notes

Each household refers to a primary family grouping: father, mother, and children. Some households have a grandparent, and some have only one parent, while others are nonfamily, such as a child living on his own. The numbers refer to the age—those to the right of the slash are males, and those to the left are females. The occupation column states the occupation of the adults in the order they are listed. All children under 17 are considered to be in school, and most seniors (over 65) act in an advisory role to the farmers, providing advice on crop rotation, fertilization, etc.

H: Household number.

ing to find some way of increasing his access to them.

Adam does not think the situation outside the village is as bleak as Lech does and feels that the restrictions on trade, the rationalizing and taxes, and the emphasis on defense are reducing the potential for profits. At town meetings he frequently argues against Lech's proposals, to little avail.

Adam feels he would be a better leader than Lech, and while he will not actively oppose Lech, he may be willing to provide covert support to those people who would. Adam would attempt to become mayor should anything happen to Lech and could become a real problem to Lech's successor.

Adam is motivated by greed and lust for power. He is an Experienced NPC who keeps a double-barreled shotgun beneath the store counter.

Christopher Harris

Chris Harris was working on a Ph.D. in chemistry at Harvard when the Soviets invaded China. He immediately joined the army and requested employment as a medic in the special forces. Upon finishing his training, he was posted to Germany, where he was in combat almost continuously from the start of the NATO intervention. In 1999, his A team was supporting a partisan group in Latvia when it received orders to delay a Soviet division that was approaching the front. This mission was beyond the capacities of the partisans, but they were promised support and reinforcement once engaged. The reinforcements never arrived, and the A team and the partisans were destroyed by the Soviets in a series of glorious but futile engagements. Chris was the surviving American, and when he made the final report requesting aid and describing the situation, he was told that he was recommended for a DSC and that further orders would be forthcoming.

Angered by the lack of support, the impossibility of the tasks, and the attempts to "buy him with a **** medal," he destroyed his radio, gathered his equipment, and "walked." Where he went and what he did during the next months is a bit hazy. He describes this period as "when he was mad" and suffering from severe battle stress. He somehow overcame the trauma and wandered into the village about a month after Lech took over.

Chris is now the town doctor and spends his free time writing a manual of emergency medicine which he intends to distribute to other villages that lack doctors to allow them to treat their ill and wounded. His chemistry knowledge is extremely valuable, for he is including chapters on the manufacture and administration of various drugs. Chris also spends some time researching herbal cures and alternative uses for folk remedies.

Chris does not involve himself in village politics. He is only

interested in curing the sick and working on his manual. He is well liked by everyone in the village and enjoys his present occupation. Despite his obvious potential as a warrior, he refuses to act in a military capacity, claiming that he is interested in saving lives, not taking them. He may accompany any military expeditions but only as a medic. Although armed with an M16 with an M203 attached, he will only use it to protect the wounded in his care.

Chris is an Elite NPC, motivated only by the desire to care for those in need of medical assistance.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The village has a number of buildings that stand out above the rest. These are described below.

The Town Hall: The town hall is the second most important building in the village (after the factory). This two-story brick building is where the village records are kept, where



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the village council meets, and where the doctor maintains his clinic, as well as the headquarters for the militia.

The Village Armory: The village armory is located in the basement and contains the ammunition and heavy weapons of the militia.

In addition, the farmers bring their personal weapons (hunting rifles, shotguns, and .22s they carry into the fields) for periodic inspection, and repair or replacement.

The militia carry personal weapons with them but store any additional weapons there. Currently, the armory contains a set of gunsmith tools, eight Mausers, five double-barreled shotguns, four .22-caliber rifles, two M16s, three G3s, one HK69, two RPG-16s, two ADMs, 15 frag grenades, six smoke grenades, three antitank grenades, 60 homemade frag grenades, one claymore mine, two cases of 8mm Mauser ammo, four cases of 12-gauge ammo, two cases of .22-caliber ammo, 120 shots of 5.56mm, 300 shots of 7.62mm NATO, four 40mm HE grenades, eight rockets, five cases of 7.62mm Bloc, one case of 7.65mm ammo (for Skorpion), one case of .45-caliber ammo, 30 shots of 9mmP ammo, two rifle grenades, and one RAW HEAT.

MISSION GUIDELINES

The players have a multitude of possible missions to accomplish. More specifically, Lech will provide them with objectives, and the players will plan and execute the mission.

The overall objective is the survival of the village, which can be broken down into specific tasks.

Training the Militia: This would be in the form of using instruction skills and the scheduling of priorities, in terms of skills to be taught, as well as a rotation of personnel through the courses while continuing to protect the village. Remember, if everyone is on course, who will be on sentry?

Obtaining Weapons by Trade, or by Raiding Marauders or Military Camps: This requires the player characters to search for weapons and to find out whether the present owners will trade for them and what they want in trade. The players may find it easier to steal the weapons, but they had better cover their tracks afterward. Another source may be by policing the battlefield after an engagement. In this way the village will increase its supply of arms and reduce the number of potential enemies. Weapons are also valuable trading items—thus, the village is always interested in obtaining more.

Planning the Defense of the Village: This task is manifold. The player characters should list the emplacements of the defensive stores, their nature (e.g., bunker with field of fire covering...) and the priority of their construction. Remember, it takes time to build these positions, and players must determine what is to be built first.

If the village is under attack, the permanent militia will be augmented by the rest of the villagers who are armed. Position must be constructed for these people as well. As a rule of thumb, the time to build or emplace defensive aids is listed in the Defensive Aids Table.

DEFENSIVE AIDS TABLE

<i>Task</i>	<i>Man Hours</i>
Two-man slit trench	6
Two-man slit trench with overhead cover	10
Permanent trench additions (revetting, etc.)	8
Digging 100m of communication trench	150
Revetting 100m of communication trench	150
Emplacing mine	5
Emplacing 100m of barbed wire	6
Constructing bunker	50

Revetting refers to reinforcing the sides of the trench with sandbags, corrugated iron, or timber. It is required for the construction to be permanent. The timings are in man hours. Thus, two people can work on a given task at a time (six people working on one trench would get in each other's way). In addition, only one person should be used to emplace a given mine. The village can supply approximately 100 hours a day to build defenses. This does not include any time the militia uses, but if all 20 permanent militia are building defenses, who is being trained or is on sentry duty?

Another task is to rehearse defensive drills: Who occupies what trench? What is the warning system? Where do the non-combatants go, and who guards them? Are there assembly points for reserves? Who is responsible for what? This is important, for if the village suddenly came under attack, the defense would not be conducted in accordance with the player characters' wishes unless they had developed standard operating procedures and drills. Most of the villagers would run about awaiting orders, or hide in their cellars, or rush to the scene of the firing, possibly responding to a diversion.

Ensuring the Security of the Area: The players should realize that the only way to allow the farmers to work unhampered is to locate, identify, and deal with threats as far away from the village as possible. Thus, the players should establish observation posts on key defiles. In addition, they should conduct patrols on a regular basis in order to locate anyone who may have slipped through. Remember, any band of marauders big enough to threaten the village is likely to approach on the main roads or at least through clear terrain, due to the need to save fuel, the difficulty of moving heavy weapons through woods or across rivers, and the ease of command and control.

If such a security zone is to be effective, some means of reliable communications must be set up. This may mean a search for radios or the laying of cable for field phones.

Mutual Defense With Other Communities: Lech feels that the security of the village can be improved through defensive alliances with other villages. In this way, the arc of observation and responsibility can be reduced for each village, and the various militias can combine to support each other in the face of large threats. To the player characters, this means they will have to scout out the nearby villages, determine who is in control and what sort of a benefit or threat the other villages pose, and provide an escort to the repre-

sentative sent by Lech. It could also mean overthrowing the existing group in control, especially if it is a gang of marauders which is ruling through terror. Lech will determine what action is to be taken based on the information the players gain.

In general, he will attempt to overthrow any government that is not of benefit to the majority of the villagers. If a nearby community contains a group of deserters or soldiers who defend the village in exchange for food and fuel, and do not interfere in the lives of the inhabitants, Lech is likely to negotiate with them. If they have taken hostages and behave as criminals, Lech will want to overthrow them and install a local council.

Escorting Wood-Gathering, Hunting, Trading, and Diplomatic Parties: This sort of mission is self explanatory and relatively common.

Scrounging: If the village requires replacements for broken machinery, drugs to combat an epidemic, or other items that cannot be manufactured in the village, Lech will ask the player characters to mount an expedition to obtain them. He may have an idea of where these items may be found and, if required, may provide the player characters with money to buy, or a person with the expertise in scrounging, that particular item.

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CONCLUSION

The village provides an environment for players to help establish a little piece of civilization in the face of the approaching chaos. Many adventures are player generated, for they have a lot of work to do to improve the security of the village. The normal encounter tables may keep the players busy, but if things slow down, the referee can always send them off to trade or scrounge. The village also provides a place for the players to rest, to winter, or to be reinforced. It allows the players to plan ahead and offers depth to adventures that focus around battles and mere survival.

The village should provide a basis for many exciting games. The key, of course, is the village's ability to rationalize and place events in a context of doing something good for a group of people who require help. Ω

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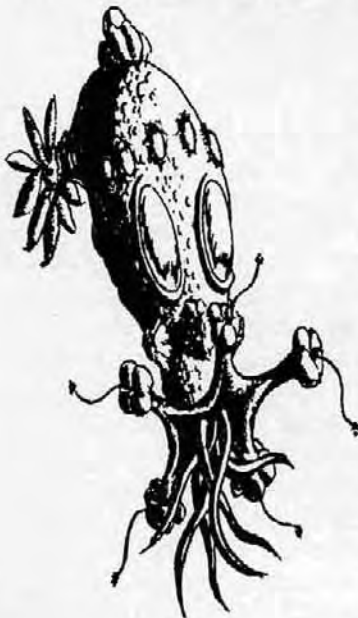
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Surprise at Clearwater

Red Captain Gary Hawkins
is a source of constant irritation
to the Oenotrian Empire.



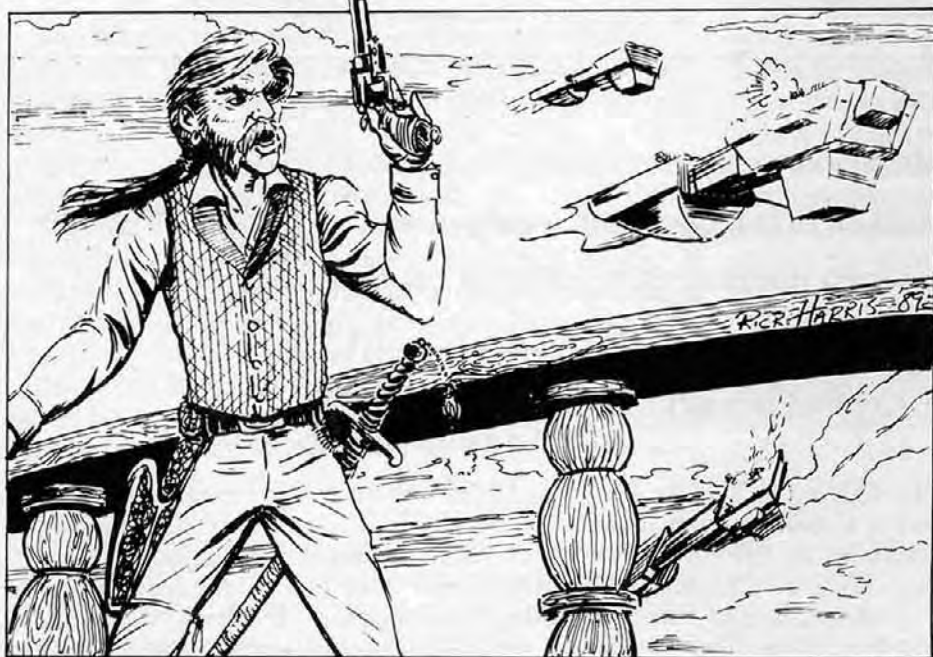
Ever since Ronald Whitfield first became a Red Captain, he and his kite, the *Cloud Leopard*, have been a source of constant irritation to the merchants of the Oenotrian Empire. To date, the

this increased threat by stepping up efforts to locate and destroy the *Cloud Leopard* and its companion vessel. With great numbers of Oenotrian warships searching for them, Whitfield and Phillips recently headed north to prey upon High Martian pirates until the ire of the Oenotrians had cooled a bit. Unfortunately for the two Red Captains, a number of Oenotrian warships pursued them all the way to the Meroe Badlands.

A few days before the beginning of this scenario, the *Cloud Leopard* and the *Sky Lynx* stumbled upon a pair of *Sky Runner*-class vessels. The Red Captains heavily damaged the two ships, but in the fighting, the *Sky Lynx* took a boiler hit, and the *Sky Runners* were able to escape.

Most of the drinking water on both Red Captains' ships went to replace that lost from the *Sky Lynx*'s boiler. With the crews on short water rations, Whitfield and Phillips decided to set a course for the city of Mylark to replenish their water and pick up other supplies.

While heading for Mylark, however, the Red Captains discovered an abandoned High Martian kraag and stopped to explore it. Upon entering the kraag, they found a spring at its bottom. With the *Cloud Leopard* keeping watch overhead, the *Sky Lynx* set down and replenished its water supply. Then, the two ships switched places, and the *Sky Lynx* kept watch. While the *Cloud Leopard* was thus occupied, a violent sandstorm swept through the region. Unable to climb above the turbulence, the *Sky Lynx* was forced to set down as well.

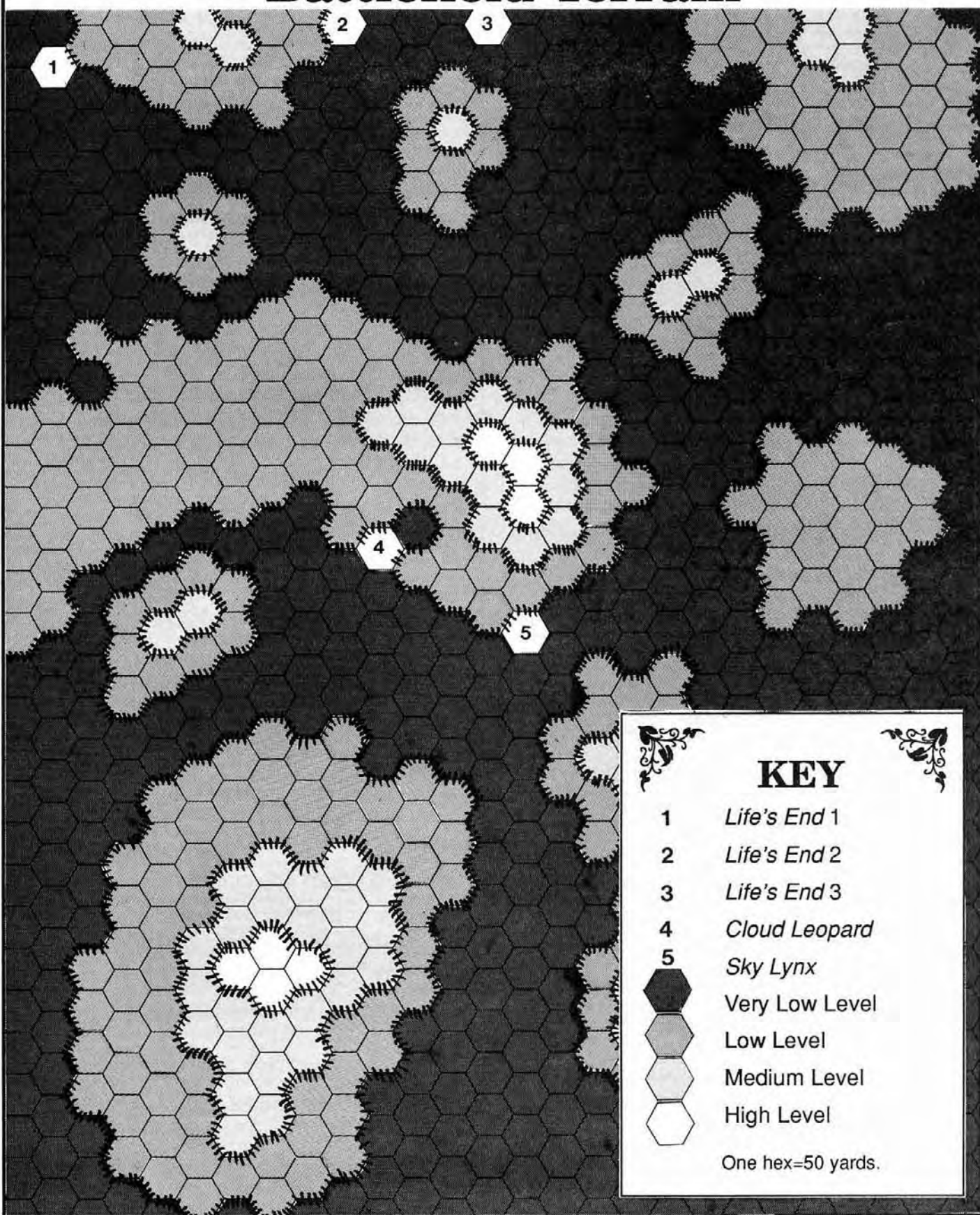


By Bret Foland
and Lester W. Smith

Cloud Leopard has captured a dozen prizes, all Oenotrian, and caused great damage to the sky fleets of the empire. As well, Whitfield's old first mate, Andrew Phillips, soon became a Red Captain in his own right, commanding the *Sky Lynx*, a small screw galley refitted with a steam engine. By working together, the two Red Captains have been able to defeat more dangerous opponents than ever before.

The Oenotrian Empire responded to

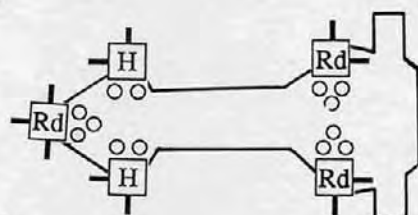
Battlefield Terrain



Life's End 1 & 2

0

£20,680



Wood

3

300 Tons

4

Bridge CHTSQQ

Deck □□□

Maneuver □□□

 □□□
 □□□
 □□□

Hull

Hits

H□□

M□□

L□□

VL□□

Screw

4

3

2

1

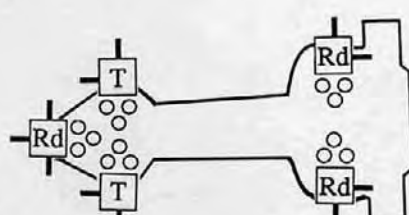
Marines

□□□□

Life's End 3

0

£20,680



Wood

3

300 Tons

4

Bridge CHTSQQ

Deck □□□

Maneuver □□□

 □□□
 □□□
 □□□

Hull

Hits

H□□

M□□

L□□

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Screw

4

3

2

1

Marines

□□□□

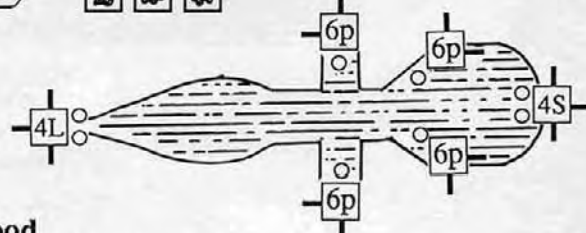
Cloud Leopard

Kite

0

£23,000

Smoke Screens



Wood

3

220 Tons

K

Spike Drovers

Bridge CHTSQQ

Deck □□□□□

Maneuver □

 □
 □

Hull

Hits

VH□□

H□□

M□□

L□□

VL□□

Masts

□

-1

-2

-3

-4

-5

-6

Marines

0□□□

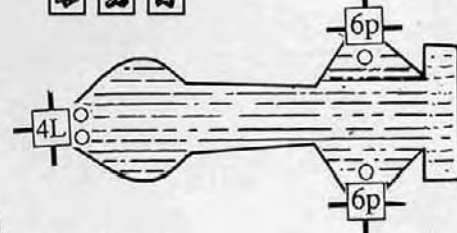
Sky Lynx

Aerial Gunboat

0

£19,000

Smoke Screens



Wood

2

200 Tons

3

Spike Drovers

Bridge CHTS

Deck □□

Maneuver □

Hull

Hits

H□

M□

L□

VL□

Screw

3

2

1

Marines

0□□□

Once the storm had passed, the two vessels prepared to get under way, but a trio of Oenotrian warships had followed close on the heels of the storm. Spotting the two ships on the ground, the Oenotrians closed in for the kill.

At this point the scenario begins.

THE RED CAPTAINS' VESSELS

THE *CLOUD LEOPARD* is simply a *Swiftwood*-class kite that has been refitted with British weaponry. The *Sky Lynx* was originally built in a Martian yard, but was later refitted with a British steam engine and weapons.

The *Cloud Leopard* has Crack crews on its four-inch long gun and the spar-mounted six-pounders. Its other gun crews are Trained. The *Sky Lynx* has Crack crews on all its guns. Marines on both vessels have modern rifles and are Trained.

Both vessels have a number of smoke screens and spike droppers, as indicated in their respective ship record forms. (Details of these two items are described in **Challenge 36**.)

THE OENOTRIAN VESSELS

THE THREE *Life's Ends* in this scenario are new designs, not encountered by the Red Captains before. One of these vessels is equipped with a thunderbolt (described in **Challenge 40**) and has exchanged its forward heavy gun for a rod gun.

Each of the three ships has one

Crack, two Trained, and one Green gun crew (to be distributed as the Martian player desires). The marines on all three ships carry muskets and are Trained.

SETUP

SHIP RECORD FORMS for all ships in this scenario are included with this article, as is a map of the terrain over which the battle takes place. To play this scenario, you will need to reproduce this map on a two-inch hex grid (if this is not practical, the Kraag Barovaar map from *Sky Galleons of Mars* may be substituted, in which case the starting points will have to be changed). The *Cloud Leopard* begins at Low altitude at point 4. The *Sky Lynx* begins on the surface (one step below Very Low altitude) at point 5.

Marian 1 begins at point 1, at Medium to High altitude. Martians number 2 and 3 enter the map at points 2 and 3 respectively, during the Martian player's movement phase of the second game turn. They also begin at Medium to High altitude.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

THE OENOTRIANS get 1 victory point for driving the *Sky Lynx* from the map, 2 points for destroying the vessel, and 4 points for capturing it. They get 2 victory points for driving the *Cloud Leopard* away, 3 points for destroying it, and 6 points for capturing it.

The Red Captains get no points for driving an Oenotrian vessel off the map,



but the get 1 point for each ship they destroy and 2 points for each one they capture.

MODEL CONVERSIONS

YOU CAN EASILY make specific models for the ships included in this scenario using the standard *Sky Galleons of Mars* sprues.

Extra sprues of these ships can be purchased from GDW in the packages of **Martian Cloudships** and **Aerial Gunboats**.

To make a *Life's End*, simply replace the forecastle of a large screw galley model with the forecastle of a small kite model, then carve or sand off the lob gun mount.

The *Sky Lynx* can be built from the hull of a small kite and the tail of an *Aphid*. Remove the fore gun from the kite and glue the tail of the *Aphid* in its place to create a quarterdeck. Finally, fill in the mast hole and sand it smooth.

The *Cloud Leopard* is built as if it were a *Swiftwood*, following the instructions included with **Martian Cloudships**.

Paint the ships to your individual taste, and enjoy the game. Ω

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The Puzzle of the Shard

The market at Meroe, while not as large as the bazaar of Syrtis Major, is still an impressive place. Almost 50 acres of twisting, turning streets, alleys, and back roads lead the adventure seeker along a thousand paths to intrigue, fame, and fortune.

This adventure begins late in the evening, in one of those back alleys, behind a tavern catering to the worst of both human and Martian tastes. Here, the characters stumble upon two thieves engaged in a spirited tug-of-war over the body of their latest victim. The two are actively disputing possession of a small leather pouch and exchanging comments on each other's ancestry. One thief concludes his argument with a knife blade, and the other joins the victim on the ground but will not release his hold on the bag. Noticing the approach of the players, the upright thief drops the bag and flees, vanishing into the rabbit warren of alleys and streets. Pursuit seems pointless.

THE BAG

THE SECOND THIEF and his victim are both dead. When the characters manage to pry the bag loose, they will find it contains a handful of small coins of all nationalities, two small figurines of carved eegaar horn, and a small, folded parchment sealed with wax and containing something hard and angular. Investigation of the bag will reveal that it is a cheap affair made of tanned gashant hide, available just about anywhere. The coins total just under three shillings in value. The parchment package contains a small, dirty, semitranslucent crystal and a shard from a much larger crystal of the same type. Prudence dictates that a dark alley in the depths of a bazaar is not a good place to perform a detailed examination of anything, and the PCs rapidly retire to their quarters.



THE FIGURINES

BOTH FIGURINES are about four inches in height and are carved from the base section of an eegaar horn (the material is quite unique in appearance and is easily identifiable). Old Mars hands will know them to be *Homindaar*, good-luck charms found practically everywhere on Mars for a penny or two, and so common as to be worthless to a serious collector of Martian curios (but popular with tourists). Both carvings are very common motifs: One shows a Martian water monk at prayer, kneeling over his holy pan in the meditative posture of his sect. The other shows a Martian peddler carrying a bundle of his wares on his back. Both were carved by the same artisan (indicated by the maker's mark on the base of each), and both are done to a high standard, indicating that they might fetch several times the normal market value of such objects (perhaps sixpence for the pair).

THE PARCHMENT

THE PARCHMENT is actually a crude map, showing what seems to be a canal, a city, a number of small villages, and a location marked with a small drawing of the crystal. It is not labeled, however, so it will be a matter of some difficulty to determine what area of Mars the map depicts.

THE CRYSTAL

THE CRYSTAL is hexagonal in cross section, about two inches long, and one-half inch in diameter, ending in a blunt point at either end. The surface is dirty and pitted, but the crystal seems to glow slightly, more at one end than the other. If the crystal is cleaned, the glow will increase; if the crystal is exposed to bright sunlight, a faint beam of light will extend a few inches from the glowing end. Covering the dark end causes the glow to stop.

THE SHARD

THE SHARD is of the same type of crystal, but it is a portion broken from one end. If the large crystal is proportional to the small one, it was originally over one foot long. The shard is also dirty and pitted, and filled with fine hairline fractures that seem to diffuse light—perhaps this explains why it does not glow like its smaller cousin when exposed to light.

A MYSTERY

THE CHARACTERS will discover that the crystal is one of a rare type called the "Tears of the Sun." It can be used to focus and concentrate the rays of the Sun into a powerful weapon. How the victim came into possession of them is a mystery. Clues soon lead the characters to the city of Polodaar, where they learn that the map is not a completely accurate guide to the crystals, and they will need someone experienced in the northern Martian wilderness to guide them.

The characters' search for a guide in Polodaar will bring them into contact with Damien Van Owen, a prospector whose knowledge of the wilderness will be very useful in the search for the crystals. Van Owen, it will transpire, is untrustworthy, and they will soon have to cope with both his treachery and the

dangers of the Martian ice cap in order to locate crystals.

Their quest will lead them to a canal that runs under the surface of the ice, ultimately taking them to a long-forgotten city in an isolated valley forever frozen in the ice. Here, however, Van Owen will finally realize that his only chance of getting a share in the crystals lies with the characters, and he will change from enemy to friend.

TEARS OF THE SUN

THE CRYSTAL and the shard are indeed both the same substance and are called Shineek Kar (Tears of the Sun) in Martian legend. These crystals, long thought to be apocryphal, are the secret to the canal-building barges which Jules Verne and other humans have speculated about for years.

If the naturally occurring facets of the crystal are carefully cleaned and polished to mirror smoothness, light entering one end of the crystal is polarized, concentrated, and reflected continuously inside the crystal, causing it to glow. Because of its crystalline structure and polished facets, the crystal allows light and heat to enter with ease, but they cannot exit as readily. As more light is fed into the crystal, it acts as a

capacitor, soaking up energy until the front facets can no longer hold it back, and it discharges in a narrow beam. In smaller crystals (those shorter than a few inches), this beam is enough to cause fires at a few hundred feet. The larger crystals, however, are much more powerful.

Using giant crystals, the ancient Martians are able to use the rays generated to melt rock and cut the canals over the face of their planet. This was accomplished as follows: A single gigantic crystal, three or four yards in length, was suspended in a framework slung under a large sky barge. The upper surface of the barge carried a system of dozens of huge mirrors, reflectors, lenses, and concentrators (smaller crystals), which gathered sunlight and focused it at the receiving end of the crystal. The discharge of these large crystals was powerful enough to melt the rock of the surface of the red planet. Properly aimed, the crystal could dig a canal in a remarkably short time. The main drawback to such a device was that it was clumsy. By charging the crystal almost to the discharge point, then covering and uncovering the mirrors at the proper instant, the operators of the barge could fire the crystal at will.

In their natural state, as the characters will discover, the crystals are pitted and dirty, and will not absorb or discharge energy. Likewise, cracked or broken crystals are similarly useless. Only relatively undamaged crystals will do anything more than glow.

ALTERNATIVES

THE SCENARIO detailed in the players' introduction on page 19 is only one of many alternatives. The referee is free to devise other methods for getting the shard into the hands of the characters. How the characters come into possession of the shard isn't important. What matters is that they realize the profits to be made from a larger crystal.

Likewise, the adventure need not begin in Meroe, either. The referee should adapt the beginning sequence to fit the needs of the players and the individual campaign. As long as they eventually arrive in Polodaar, all will be well.

CLUES

THE CHARACTERS will presumably wish to investigate the interesting objects that have just come into their possession. Just how they go about this is for them to decide. The following paragraphs are a summary of the various results.

The Map: A detailed examination of the map by someone knowledgeable in Martian geography will identify the city as Polodaar and the point indicated by the crystal as somewhere to the north at the edge of the Martian polar ice cap. The map is obviously a very crude one, since it is not done to a consistent scale and the locations of certain landmarks are inconsistent.

A guide who has some familiarity of the area north of Polodaar will be necessary.

The Carvings: If one of the characters decides to take the carvings to a dealer for an evaluation, the dealer will remark that the carvings are of exceptionally fine craftsmanship and will offer four pence for the lot. If questioned (or bribed), he will identify the maker as a well known artist from Polodaar whose work sometimes makes it to Meroe. This may be enough to persuade the characters that the solution to their mystery probably lies in Polodaar.

ORIGINS

THE CRYSTALS, called "Tears of the Sun," were formed as a result of a rare combination of pressure, material, and temperature eons ago in the remote prehistory of the red planet. Long before life arose on Mars, the conditions that gave birth to these crystals ceased producing them. Most of them are quite small, less than an inch in length, but a few large ones (more than a yard in length, rarely longer) made it to the surface. The crystals are like quartz or volcanic glass in that they are quite hard and, at the same time, very brittle.

The crystals are brought to the surface as a result of conventional geological processes, and occur in surface or near-surface deposits in certain locations on Mars. All known deposits of the crystals were mined out generations ago, during the period of the canal builders, when they were used in the construction of the canals (see the explanation in the main text). No examples of the crystals are known to survive, and they were thought to be mythical by most humans (and not a few Martians).



The Crystal and the Shard: If the characters display the crystal and/or the shard at the same shop they show the carvings, the merchant will show momentary surprise, but will quickly recover. After examining them for a few moments, he will remark that they are a curiosity of slightly greater value than the carvings, especially if a large one can be found. He will offer a shilling for the one the players have and will inquire where they got it. Further events will depend on the characters' actions. But the merchant will know the true value of the crystals and will try to steal the characters' map (unless they are fool enough to give it to him.) Depending upon what the characters tell him, the merchant may decide to have them followed, send a gang of thugs to steal the map and the crystals, or offer to come along on an expedition to find crystals. But he will not reveal the true value of the crystals.

THE TRIP TO POLODAAR

ASIDE FROM a possible ambush by thugs, the characters' trip to Polodaar should be uneventful and swiftly concluded by whatever transport the characters have at their disposal. The normal Martian encounter tables can be used until the players arrive in Polodaar (modified at the referee's discretion). Depending on how vigilant the characters are, they may notice that the merchant has had them followed. If the characters have not aroused the merchant's suspicions by showing him the crystal, the referee may still wish to implement an encounter with a marauding group of bandits, just to keep the group alert. The merchant may have recommended a contact in Polodaar, either Damien Van Owen or some other individual. If this is the case, the ambush by thugs seeking the map will not occur (at least not until later).

THE CITY OF POLODAAR

THE CITY OF Polodaar is one of the northern-most city-states of the old empire, and it presently owes its existence to the regional fur trade. Most of the city is deserted, and the population is less than one-tenth of what it was during the height of Seldon's empire. A

canal runs through the city, but only the stretch south of the city is maintained. The only traffic from the north is the annual flood water (in uncontrolled surges) that has often threatened to wash away the city entirely. Travel northward from the city is fairly easy, however, since the canal is scoured clean of debris by the annual torrents of melt water. Nomads bring in hides throughout the spring and summer trapping seasons and trade them in the market for manufactured goods and luxuries. A few small farming villages still exist, scratching out a sparse living in the short and chilly growing season.

POSSIBILITIES

MULTIPLE POSSIBILITIES are open to the characters once they arrive in Polodaar. These depend, to a large degree, on what actions the characters took in Meroe while investigating their collection of artifacts.

The Carvings: The purpose of the two carvings is to draw the players' attention to Polodaar and get them to guess that it is the city shown on the map. Trying to trace down the artist who made the carvings will prove to be a dead end (but the referee should not discourage such action). He will be fairly easy to locate and will readily identify the work as his own, but he will know nothing further about them. He makes hundreds of such carvings a year and has no way of keeping track of them after they leave his shop. He will know nothing about the map and will know only vague legends about the Tears of the Sun (he will tell the players that they



are said to store sunshine during the day for use as lamps after dark).

The Map: If the characters consult a person knowledgeable in Martian geography, they will learn the same things noted on page 20.

The Crystals: If the characters have not consulted anyone about the crystals in Meroe and do so in Polodaar, the referee should simply transfer the events in the merchant's shop from that city to here. The merchant will express some slight interest, all the while secretly plotting to steal the map from the characters. Otherwise, the characters will learn little more than they already know.

Searching for a Guide: If the characters ask about a guide to the territory in the north, they will eventually be led to Damien Van Owen (who seems best suited to the job). If the merchant has suggested the characters contact Damien, the human and the Martian will be confederates; otherwise, Damien will be acting on his own. The players can possibly be followed by the Meroen merchant's thugs and the Polodaar merchant's thugs, and be the subject of Damien's plottings all at once (but this may be a little complicated for most referees).

EQUIPMENT

MOST OF MARS is decidedly warm, but the polar regions are a different matter entirely. The local inhabitants wear much more clothing than their southern cousins, and certain items of equipment are required for travellers in the icy north of the red planet. Tents and several blankets are required, of course. The characters might find a couple of other items useful as well.

Clothing, Cold Weather: Primarily, this consists of thick woolen undergarments, a long, heavy coat, mittens, knit mufflers, scarves, earmuffs, and so on. *Weight:* 12 lbs. *Price:* £1.

Stove, Portable: This is a small, liquid-fuel stove designed to be used to heat a tent or other small enclosure. *Weight:* 4 lbs. *Price:* 8/6.

DAMIEN VAN OWEN (Experienced NPC)



DAMIEN VAN OWEN is a standard fixture in many frontier settlements, the broken-down old man who has spent his life chasing rainbows and has ended up in the gutter. Van Owen was bitten by the gold bug in the 1840s and was one of thousands who went to California after the discovery of the rich deposits near Sutter's Mill. Like many others, Van Owen did not strike it rich in California, but he did manage to scrape out enough of a living in the gold fields to whet his appetite for more. Since that time, Van Owen has sought gold in Colorado and Australia, emeralds in Venezuela, ivory in the fever-ridden interior of the dark continent, and fire jewels on the high plains of Moab.

It is not for lack of ability or intelligence that Van Owen is still searching. Like many men, he has found a fortune many times, and he has always squandered it while seeking more. Usually he finds just

enough to get a grubstake for his next trip, which he believes will be the one where he finds his Ophir, his El Dorado, his Cibola. Although Van Owen is very intelligent, he has never realized that it is the search he enjoys above all else. Finding the Tears of the Sun, however, might be just what it takes to satisfy him and make him settle down. Van Owen will initially intend to betray everyone concerned to get the crystals, but upon arrival in the Valley of the Crystals, he will realize he needs help to accomplish this goal.

Attributes Skills

Str: 5	Fisticuffs 4, Throwing 2, Close Combat 3 (edged weapon)
Agil: 2	Stealth 1, Marksmanship 1 (rifle)
End: 6	Wilderness Travel 5 (foraging), Fieldcraft 1, Swimming 1
Int: 4	Observation 3
Chr: 3	Linguistics 2 (Koline 1)
Soc: 1	Leadership 1

Motives: Frugal, Stubborn, Ruthless.

Appearance: Van Owen is a short, stocky man in his sixties who looks about a decade younger. He is bald and has a short but bristly beard (which was originally auburn but has been bleached to a grayish yellow by the years and the Sun). His skin has been burnt brown as a nut by years of living in the wilderness, and his nose shows signs of having been broken once or twice. At first glance, he might appear to be just like a hundred other battered old prospectors, but on closer examination the players will notice several things that give the lie to this impression. For one thing, his limbs are powerfully muscled, and he is stronger than many men half his age. For another, his eyes are sharp as a gimlet, and he has a piercing stare that shows intelligence lurking behind the senile facade. Van Owen carries a pair of heavy revolvers, a 12-gauge shotgun, and a throwing knife in his boot.

DAMIEN

AS DESCRIBED in the sidebar, Damien is a grizzled, old prospector with some experience in the region, although he has never been to the specific area indicated on the map. If the players show him the map, however, he will immediately recognize several of the key landmarks and will know exactly where the crystals are to be found. He will not reveal this fact to the characters, however, intending to betray everyone concerned and keep the crystals for himself.

Damien will pretend to be a little slow, just enough to convince the players that he is too stupid to be anything but honest. At the same time, he will display considerable knowledge of the area and its dangers, enough to convince the characters that he will make a good guide.

If Damien and the merchant are confederates, the prospector will be planning to betray him as well. If the merchant has had the players followed by his gang of thugs (but Damien is not in cahoots with him), Damien will notice this fact immediately and call it to the characters' attention, as a means of convincing them of his loyalty.

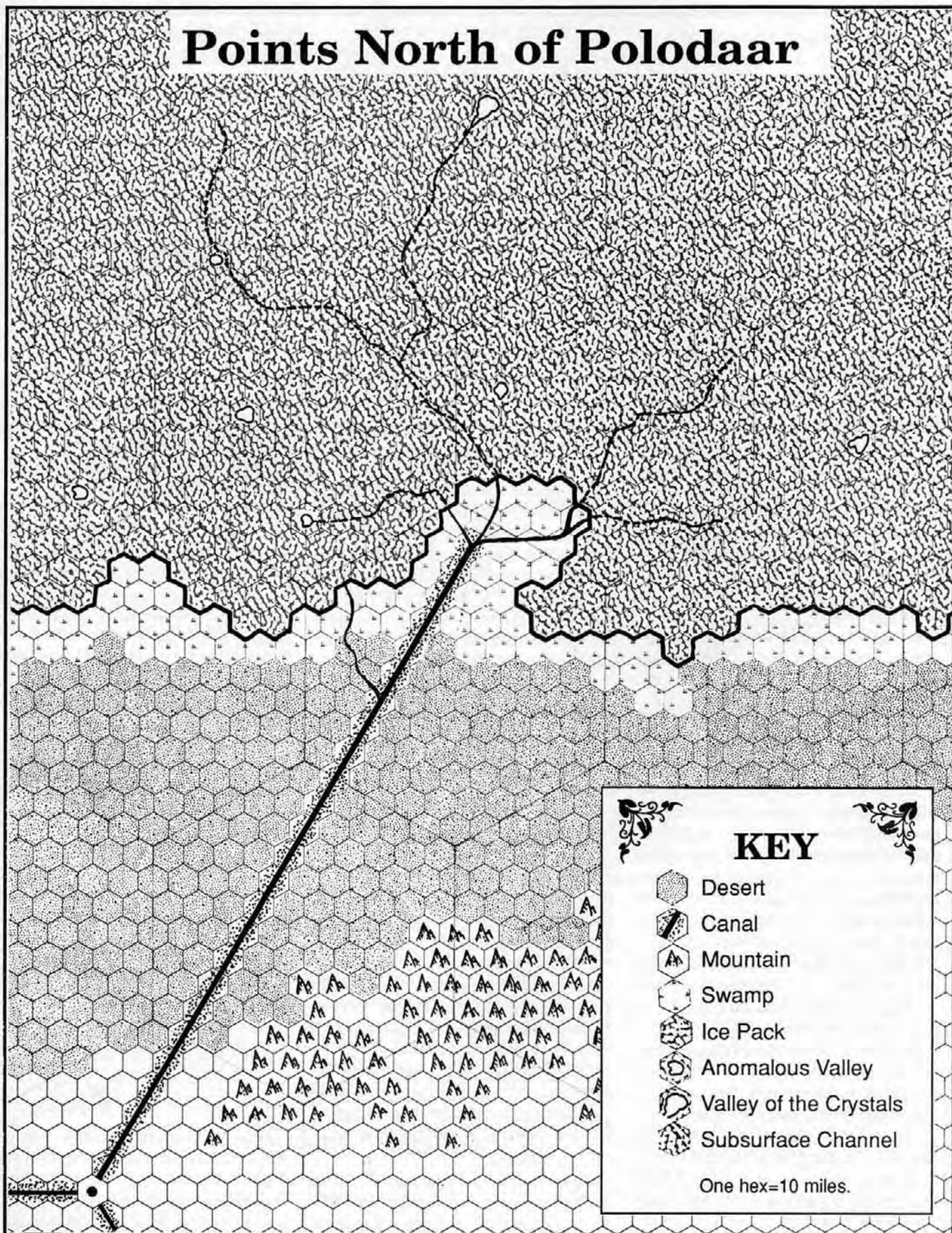
Observant players may be able to see through Damien's act. How this comes about is for the referee to decide. The best way to work it is to have Damien's actions seem odd, but not to reveal too much at any one time.

Whatever happens, if Van Owen is still with the group when they arrive at the Valley of the Crystals, he will undergo a change of heart as he realizes that he needs the cooperation of the characters to get the crystals (and the wealth they represent) back to civilization.

Damien will advise the characters on the equipment they will need for a trip to the ice cap, primarily warm clothing and ample stocks of food. Ruumet breehr cannot survive the cold very well and are not used in the area around Polodaar.

The players will need to acquire gashants (a specially acclimatized northern breed, readily available in Polodaar) if they are to travel by land.

Points North of Polodaar



If the players are to travel by flyer or canal boat, the trip will be easier in the initial stages, but Damien will suggest that they take a few gashants along, just in case ("Tha' make good eatin', 'fit comes to that.").

POINTS NORTH

IT IS ASSUMED that the characters are making their trip north in the late winter, after the worst of the cold weather is over, but before the large-scale flooding that will make travel along the canal more hazardous. It is also assumed that the characters have no canal boat or aerial flyer, and are travelling on gashants. If necessary, the referee should adjust the situation to reflect the characters' earlier actions and decisions.

ENCOUNTERS ON THE WAY

DURING THE TRIP north of Polodaar, use the encounter table on page 25.



Ice Pack/Glacier: The only place on the red planet where precipitation falls is at the poles, in the form of snow. As snow builds up, its own weight compresses it into ice. Sometimes this ice pack is trapped by various geological features and remains static. Most of the time, however, it begins to move in an ice formation known as a glacier. The movement is very slow (hence, the word "glacial"), but it can be overwhelmingly powerful as well. During epochs known as "ice ages," glaciers on Earth have periodically moved down out of their birthplaces to grind mountains to powder and have scoured the plains of North America into the flatlands for which they are famous. Because of the known power of glaciers on Earth, it was believed that nothing could live in the polar regions of Mars except a few bands of Hill Martians and the thinly scattered game they pursued. This was a mistaken notion.



Anomalous Valleys: For various reasons, small oasis-like valleys are occasionally found in the depths of the polar ice pack. These valleys are usually the result of volcanism bringing heat from the depths of Mars to keep the ice from building up. In these small valleys (less than a couple of miles across), tiny colonies of plant and animal life survive, surrounded by thousands of square miles of barren ice and drifted snow.

MARTIAN POLAR ENCOUNTERS

THE POLAR REGIONS of Mars are different than similar locales further south. The climate is cooler, and the region is less densely populated. The animals encountered bear some resemblance to their more southerly relatives, but there are significant differences. Use the encounter table on page 25.



Ancient Wreck: This encounter can represent the wreckage of an ancient canal barge from the time of the deterioration of the empire. It was picked clean long ago but may still be of archaeological interest and may be worth a second expedition. The condition of the wreck and its specific details are left up to the referee to describe.

Camp: This encounter represents the discovery of a temporary camp of a group of valley people. The results of this encounter depend upon the characters' actions.

Covered Pool: This encounter represents a pool in the surface of the ice, concealed from view by a thin crust of ice and coating of snow. The only way

to discover one is to fall through the surface into it. Quick action is necessary to extract the victim, and it will be necessary to stop, pitch a tent, and dry out the victim's clothing near a fire before proceeding.



Lone Eegaar: This encounter is with a rogue eegaar, driven from the herd for some reason such as disease or age.

Eegaar Herd: These creatures are as described in **Space:1889**.

Eelowaan: These creatures are as described in **Space: 1889**.

Flying Skrill: These creatures are as described in **Space: 1889**.

Lone Gashant: This encounter is with a rogue gashant, one driven from the herd for some reason such as disease or age. It is one of the northern variety, described below.

Gashant Herd: Wild gashants encountered north of Polodaar are of the specialized northern variety. These gashants are more adapted to the colder climate of the polar and semipolar regions. The main adaptation is a thicker layer of insulating fat than is found on their more southern cousins. They tend to be darker in color than their southern counterparts, possibly as an adaptation to absorb more heat from the Sun.

Great Kommota: These creatures are as described in **Space: 1889**.



Hibernating Cissawaans: This far north, cissawaans are active only during the warmer months of the year. During the colder periods, they hibernate in large lumps in caves and sheltered burrows. They are readily awak-

ened, however, and can come bursting out of their shelters to take unwary travellers by surprise.

High Martian Hunter: This encounter is with a solitary hunter from one of the mountain kraags of the far north.

High Martian Hunters: The High Martians of the northern mountains have little contact with humans. Nevertheless, they will be slightly hostile.

Impassable Crevasse: This is a wide, deep chasm in the surface of the ice. Its walls are too steep to climb or descend, and it is too wide to jump. Parties on the surface will have to detour around this hex.

Lone Hunter: This encounter represents a single nomad hunter, and is identical to the lone nomad entry in the Martian wilderness encounters of *Space: 1889*.

Nomad Hunters: This encounter represents a group of nomads on a hunting expedition, and it is identical to the nomad hunters entry in the Martian wilderness encounters of the *Space: 1889* rules book.

Prospector/Lost Prospector: This encounter does not represent the individual so much as traces of his presence. The region around Polodaar is not well known for its mineral wealth, and the prospectors in this region are not as numerous as elsewhere. In the case of a lost prospector encounter, the group has run across a prospector who has lost his bearings and is wandering aimlessly. Van Owen may or may not know the prospector, but he will not be

inclined to share secrets with him.

Quicksand: This encounter is with a pool of quicksand, which can trap and drown the unwary. Fast action is needed in order to extract the victim, and rescue is usually achieved at the sacrifice of any equipment carried.

Roogie Pack: These creatures are as described in *Space: 1889*.

Snow-worm: This encounter is with a single large snow-worm, as described on page 26.

Valley Hunters: This encounter is with a group of three to six hunters from one of the anomalous valleys of the polar ice pack. Their reaction to humans will be similar to that discussed under the next entry.



Village: A relatively permanent village of a few dozen valley dwellers in an anomalous valley. Their knowledge of humans will mostly be based on hearsay and limited contact with a prospector or fur trader. At the referee's option, they may be openly hostile or cautiously curious. If good relations can be established, they can prove to be valuable guides and reliable sources of information about local conditions.



CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER

THE LOCATION MARKED by the drawing of the crystal proves to be the mouth of a small feeder channel for the main canal to Polodaar. Investigation of this area will reveal a number of small sandbars and other deposits containing small Tears of the Sun (an inch or less in length) and broken fragments of larger crystals, evidently washed down from higher up the channel. Any crystals the characters find (this number is left up to the referee) will be pitted and cracked to such an extent that they are useless.

The obvious course of action at this time is to follow the channel upstream, because somewhere up its course lies the source of the crystals. The polar ice soon becomes visible on the horizon, a faint white line at first, gradually increasing in thickness as the characters approach. The channel does not meander like a natural stream—it seems to have been cut into the bedrock, like a smaller version of the canals. It points straight toward the ice wall on the horizon.

From time to time as the characters travel along the channel, they will find more crystals (always small, cracked,

ENCOUNTERS						
Terrain	Desert	Canal Bank	Mountain	Swamp	Ice Pack/Glacier	Anomalous Valley
Encounter #	1	2	2	3	1	3
Die Roll	Encounter Type					
1	Prospector	Prospector	High Martian Hunter	Lost Prospector	Snow-Worm	Snow-Worm
2	Hunter	Nomad Hunters	High Martian Hunters	Hibernating Cissawaans	Covered Pool	Village
3	Lone Hunter	Prospector	Flying Skrill	Quicksand	Lone Eegaar	Eegaar Herd
4	Roogie Pack	Roogie Pack	Eelowaan	Roogie Pack	Valley Hunters	Camp
5	Lone Eegaar	Ancient Wreck	Great Kommota	Hunter	Impassable Crevasse	Roogie Pack
6	Lone Gashant	Gashant Herd	High Martian Hunters	Lone Gashant	Lone Gashant	Gashant Herd



SNOW-WORMS

THE SNOW-WORM is one of the most mysterious and little known creatures on Mars. The beast's metabolism is unique in that its blood contains a naturally occurring compound that counteracts the effects of the region's extremely low temperatures. This compound enables snow-worms to remain active in temperatures that would leave other beasts frozen solid, even though they are not warm-blooded.

Despite this, snow-worms could not survive in the barren polar regions if it were not for the existence of the anomalous valleys scattered throughout the polar landscape, which provide them with a relatively constant food supply.

Type	# App.	Size	Move	Wounds	Save	Weight (lbs.)	Weapons
Snow-Worm	1	1x3	L20	6	31	200	Teeth (3, 2, 0, 1)

and useless) and occasional large fragments. At some point, to keep up their spirits, they should be allowed to find one or two small crystals in good condition, suitable for polishing (which they are not capable of doing in their present location). As they approach the ice, the weather becomes colder and colder, and they soon find a thin layer of snow on the ground. The snow gets thicker the closer they approach the ice.

Finally, the characters arrive at the edge of the ice and find that the channel emerges from a hole about 20 feet up the icy slope of the glacier's edge. At this time of year, a small stream of water trickles from the opening and flows down a small groove in the ice slope. The hole from which it emerges is oval in cross section, and about 30 feet wide and 10 feet high. Sand, silt, and gravel are being washed down out of the glacier, and the channel down the frozen slope is lined with such detritus. Also, fragments of crystal are sprinkled down the slope—their source obviously lies inside the glacier.

EXCUSES

VAN OWEN, upon arrival at the edge of the ice, will claim that he has had no

experience in travelling on the ice cap and will suggest that they turn back. This is a lie, of course. Although he has not travelled extensively over the polar ice and has never been to this particular section before, he has had more experience at such travel than he lets on. This is a ruse to get the players to abandon the search for the crystals so he can return later and claim them.

If pressed, he will exaggerate the dangers involved and argue against continuing, but he will acquiesce to the characters' demands if it becomes obvious that they intend to continue without him.

HARD CHOICES

TWO OPTIONS are now open to the players. They can enter the channel in the ice and follow it wherever it goes, or they can climb to the top of the ice and try to follow the channel from above. A short investigation will reveal that the ice allows a small amount of light to pass through to the channel, so the interior will not be totally dark (contrary to what Van Owen says), although it will not be possible to see more than a few dozen yards down the tunnel. Investigations will also reveal that it is possible to trace

the course of the channel from the top of the ice, but travel there will be very slow because of a thick layer of snow.

In 10 minutes, any unencumbered human may climb to the channel or to the top of the ice. Using ropes and a block-and-tackle arrangement, they will be able to bring up packs, gashants, and any other equipment they have brought along. This will prove to be equally difficult, regardless of which course is taken. Van Owen may (at the referee's discretion) attempt sabotage by arranging an "accident" during the hoisting process. He is no fool, of course, and will not take any overt action that will expose his plans. Likewise, he will do nothing that will get himself killed (e.g., destroy vital supplies such as fuel and equipment). If the PCs have barges or boats, they will not be able to use them to travel in the subsurface channel or along the top of the ice. It will be impossible to trace the course of the channel from the air, and the PCs will need to send at least part of their group on foot if they have an aerial craft.

THE SUBSURFACE OPTION

MELT WATERS form ice rivers on top of the ice during the summer. Often, the

surface will freeze over in the fall before the flow has completely stopped, forming a cavern-like channel just under the snow. The channels will become more or less permanent features of the landscape, detectable from the surface only by careful inspection of the ice. These channels almost invariably follow the old imperial drainage watershed which leads to the canals, feeding them water each season.

Travel beneath the surface of the ice will be somewhat easier than travel on top of it: The characters will not be exposed to the wind and weather during the trip. A small trickle of water flows down the channel, but not enough to cause problems.

Van Owen will pretend to fear a sudden flash flood, but this is a ruse to persuade the characters to turn back. The floor of the subsurface channel will be lightly coated with silt and sand, and crystals will be found embedded in the ice from time to time. Most of these will be unusable, but the referee should allow enough good ones to keep the characters' interest.

The light level in the channel will change from time to time as the thickness of the ice overhead changes (visibility will range from several dozen yards to a few feet, unless the characters have thought to bring some form of artificial illumination). Sometimes the ice overhead will open up completely, only to close again after a few miles. In this way, surface encounters can be justified while travelling underground.

THE SURFACE OPTION

TRAVEL ON THE SURFACE will be half the normal walking rate, due to the deep snow on the surface. Once each day, the characters must check to see if they keep on track with the subsurface channel (use the best Observation in the group for the roll). Failure means that the group must backtrack for a day to regain the trail. An impassable crevasse encounter while following the channel should be interpreted as an opening leading downward to the subsurface channel. This presents the PCs with the option of entering the channel or continuing on the surface.

VALLEY OF THE CRYSTALS

IF THE CHARACTERS follow the channel successfully, they will eventually come to the source of the trickle of melt water. This is one of the anomalous valleys of the region. The characters' arrival in the valley assumes that they have successfully ignored Van Owen's attempts to dissuade them from continuing.

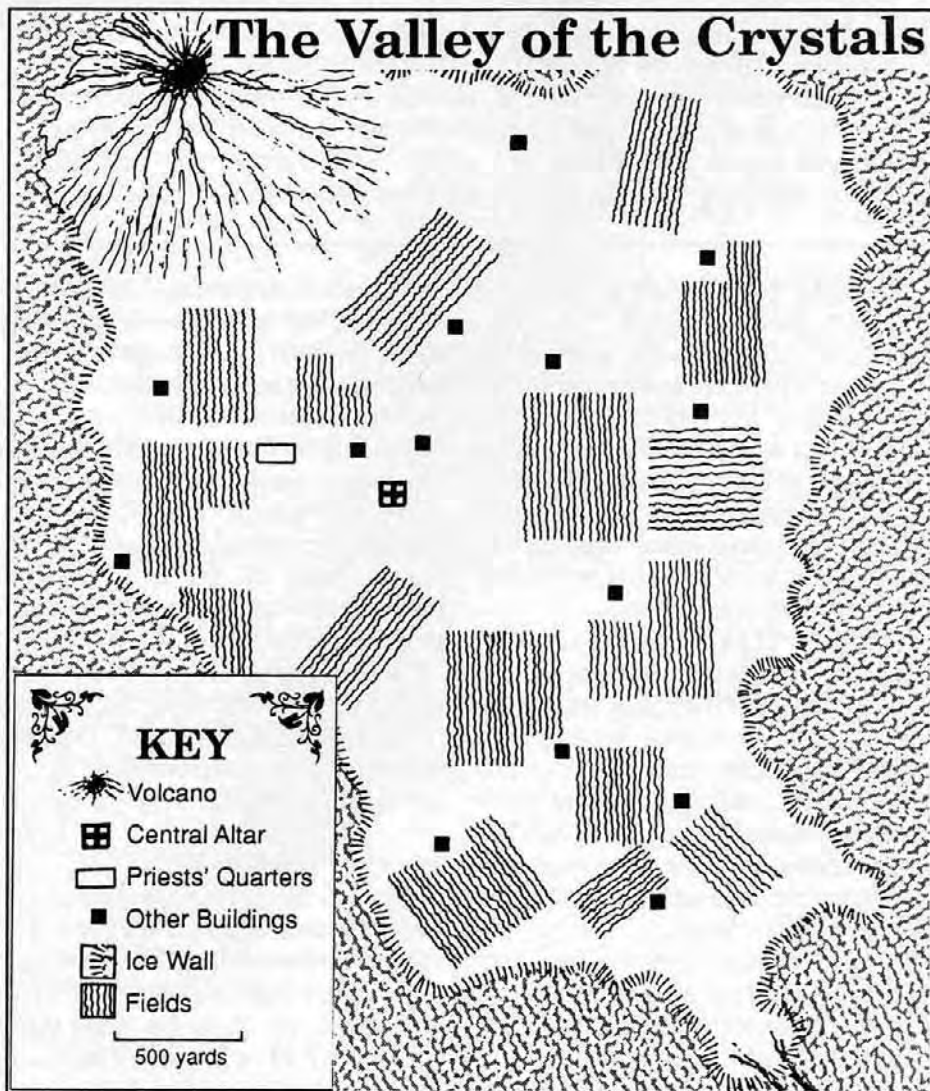
The valley is surrounded by impassable walls of ice. The only way in or out is the subsurface channel, which the locals consider to be the passage to the afterlife and imbue with mystical characteristics. The heat from volcanic hot springs enables small-scale agriculture in the valley, but the food produced is limited; strict population controls are necessary.

Heat from the hot springs constantly melts some of the ice (which the mov-



ing glacier replaces as fast as it melts). The resulting water drains down the subsurface channel.

The volcano occasionally spews forth showers of ash (replenishing the soil) and (rarely) crystals, which are taken to be gifts of the gods and put to use as field markers, landfill, building materials, etc. depending on their size and condition. Small and broken crystals will be sent down the channel as offerings to the dead.



REWARDS

THE PCs WILL COME OUT of this adventure with interesting stories and at least one small crystal (which will make a nice cigar lighter). Also, the characters should get the normal experience points for their actions.

If the PCs made it to the Valley of the Crystals, they can raise a little money (and not inconsiderable renown) giving lectures and publishing articles about the society there. The Royal Geographic Society or some other group may fund an expedition for further study of the polar regions, especially in the light of the discovery of the isolated anomalous valley cultures. The characters will be in a good position to act as guides with such an expedition.

If the characters get away with the large crystals, they have three options. First, they could give the crystals to the government of their choice as a demonstration of their loyalty, trusting said government to reward them properly. Second (more likely, given the way most characters think) they could sell the crystals (preferably exercising some discretion—it wouldn't do for such weapons to end up in the hands of that rascal Bismarck, would it?). Third, they could keep the crystals and try to build their own heat ray.

Building a heat ray will be quite a job. How to polish the crystals for maximum capacity, how to mount them, how many times they can be used before they shatter from stress, how long they must be exposed to the sunlight to charge them, etc. can only be learned by experimentation and careful study.

It is no easier to invent a heat ray with the crystals than it is without them, but the final product will be 20 percent lighter. A heat ray of the type described in *Space: 1889* will require one large crystal and three one-foot crystals as concentrators. Smaller crystals are simply scientific curiosities.

Society: Government is by council of elders, primarily priests. Since outside attack is not possible, soldiers are unnecessary, except as enforcers of the council's will. Hunters exist only to kill vermin that eat crops. Farmers make up the rest of the population, except for a few craftsmen who live and work in the temple. Everyone has his place, and the society cannot afford experimentation or revolutionary changes.

Religion: The local religion holds that the world consists completely of ice, and the inhabitants of the valley are the last members of the Martian race in existence. The volcano embodies heat, and therefore life, and is the physical representation of spirits and gods of life. The ice embodies cold, and therefore death, and is the representative of all the spirits and gods of death.

The priests use ceremony and sacrifice to maintain a careful balance between heat and cold, light and dark, and life and death. Part of the means of maintaining this balance is the altar of

the gods of life and death. The altar consists of a raised platform of rammed earth, crowned by two large (four-foot-long) crystals, buried broad end (receiving end) downward. The left crystal represents heat/life; the right represents ice/death. Each large crystal is surrounded by a ring of four smaller (one-foot-long) crystals, representing the lesser gods of the local Martian pantheon. Burial customs involve interment in small caverns at the base of the ice wall, preceded by ceremonies at the mouth of the subsurface ice channel (the gateway to the afterlife). Over the years, natural movement of the glacier carries these graves away.

ARRIVAL

HOW THE CHARACTERS are greeted and treated when they arrive will depend on what route they take. If they arrive from the surface (lowering themselves by rope down the sheer ice walls of the valley), they will be greeted as representatives of the gods of life. If they arrive

from the ice tunnel, they will be greeted as representatives of the gods of death. In either case, the humans will not be considered gods themselves—merely messengers or servants of the gods (there is a great deal of difference).

If the characters arrive during the day, they will be discovered immediately. If they arrive during the night, they will not be discovered until daylight. It will be extremely difficult for the characters to remain hidden in the valley, since every square yard is used to its fullest extent for cropland, storage, or living space. It will be difficult to find a place to hide. On the other hand, the locals do not have sentries on patrol—life is so controlled that there is no need for guards except to prevent vermin from eating the crops or the stored food.

During nighttime, any character may remain concealed unless he performs some blatant act, such as firing a gun or attempting to enter a storehouse. During daylight, any moving character must roll against Stealth to remain concealed. If the characters are spotted, they will be immediately identified as strangers.

Strangers in the valley can only be messengers of the gods, and it is important that the priests interview them immediately to determine what the gods want. Within minutes of their discovery, the natives will approach the players, bowing and showing other signs of great respect.

They will greet the characters in a dialect of Old Gaaryani (the nearly extinct language of the old Martian Empire). They will then explain that the priests did not expect a visit and will ask the messengers to follow. The Martians will be puzzled if the strangers do not understand, but after a minute or two they will signal their request by insistent gestures.

BEFORE THE COUNCIL

THE PCs WILL BE taken to the council, which meets in an open space in the center of the valley, before the altar to the gods of life. After a voluminous greeting and small ceremonial chantings, the characters will be brought before the priests, who will ask what the

gods wish to tell their children (also in a dialect of Old Gaaryani).

Anything that indicates that the messengers have been damaged (such as the fact that the messengers can only speak gibberish—cannot speak Old Gaaryani) or a sign that the gods are testing their priests (such as the statement that the gods want their symbolic crystals back) will require the priests to take the proper steps. The proper response, in either case, is to return the messengers and hope the gods try again. If they came from the realm of death, they must be killed and returned in that fashion. If they came from the realm of life, they must be sent skyward by throwing them into the volcano.

On the other hand, if the messengers can speak properly (that is, if one or more of the characters speak Old Gaaryani, even with an accent) and they give an innocuous message ("the gods wish us to watch you for time," or if they present some trinket and say "the gods have sent this gift to their children") their reception will be different. They will be conducted on a guided tour of the valley and shown that everything is being done properly. This will include a short tour of the altar and a description of the upcoming "return the messengers to the gods" ceremony, which will be conducted tomorrow, after a night of cleansing and purification rites. The characters' reactions to this news are predictable. The 10 fire priests will conduct their rites at the lip of the volcano, the 10 ice priests at the mouth of the channel. The central altar will also be purified and cleansed at dawn, just before the ceremony begins.

Subsequent events will be left to the referee. The PCs will be allowed free run in the valley through the night (providing they don't upset the purification rituals), and some activity, other than sleep, is expected.

As to how they make their escape, there are a number of options.

The Wall: To climb the sheer cliff wall, they must roll against Agility or Mountaineering skill, whichever is greater. Characters are allowed two tries; failure on both means they have run out of time.

The Crystals: The characters can be

allowed to gather 2D6 crystals each (roll 1D6x2 for length in inches) from scrap heaps, field boundaries, etc. If they try to take the larger crystals, they will encounter four difficulties:

- The guardian/priests at the altar.
- Digging without being discovered.
- Getting them out of the valley.
- Dealing with priests (engaging in night-long rites) at the channel entrance.

Time will be an important consideration. It will take one person 10 turns to loosen and free each large crystal; two people can halve this time (additional workers don't help). One turn will be enough to loosen and extract four of the smaller crystals.

Alarm and Pursuit: The six guardian/priests at the altar (Trained NPCs armed with clubs) must be dealt with swiftly and silently, but they will not be expecting treachery and will be easy to surprise (roll once against each attacking player's Stealth, implementing a +1). If surprise is achieved, the defenders can be killed or rendered unconscious within four turns without a gunshot being fired, and no alarm will be raised. If the fighting lasts longer than four turns or if a gunshot is fired at any time, the alarm will be raised, and the PCs will have four turns before reinforcements arrive.

Reinforcements will be 4D6 Martians (Green NPCs armed with clubs and farming implements). Every five turns, roll 2D6 for more reinforcements.



Carrying the Crystals: The two large crystals each weigh about 300 pounds, and the foot-long crystals weigh about three pounds each. Two or three characters will be needed for each crystal, depending upon the characters' Strength and the other load they carry. It is just under one-half mile (800 yards) from the altar to the nearest ice wall, and about the same distance to the channel entrance. If the alarm has been given, roll against the worst Stealth characteristic in the group every four turns for discovery. If the alarm has not been given, roll for discovery every 10 turns. Discovery will be by a party of 4D6 Martians (Green NPCs armed with clubs).

The Channel: The 10 ice priests at the entrance to the subsurface channel (Trained NPCs armed with clubs) will be engaged in purification rituals and will be easy to surprise, unless the alarm has been given. If the alarm is given, they will be alert (surprising them will be a Difficult task in this case). Once the characters have escaped down the ice tunnel, they will not be pursued. Ω

Feedback Results for Challenge 39

Rifle River	3.56
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We look forward to hearing your opinions on issue 41. Ω



TRAVELLER NEWS SERVICE

BERANGE/HINTERWORLDS (0311 C428ACB-B)

Date: 149-1119

¶ Three Solomani warships which entered the system four days ago have ended their reign of terror and destruction within the Berange star system.

¶ The three ships have been identified as the Solomani Cruisers *Donetsk* and *Abidjan* with the support of the light cruiser *Baffin Bay*. These ships were attached to Solomani fleets battling Margaret's forces in Old Expanses sector and are apparently breaking out through Hinterworlds in the face of stepped-up offenses out of Delphi.

¶ Upon entering the system, the three vessels destroyed several system defense boats around gas giant Ythhi and performed frontier refueling.

¶ Obviously well informed as to the Berange system's industrial base, the ships then proceeded directly to Ryathian, Ythhi's third moon and home of Nummen Industries' system distribution point. After destroying communication stations, the Solomani vessels took the moon hostage for 37 hours, ravaging the facilities there for spare parts and other supplies. The vessels jumped out of the system before approaching Ral Ranthan ships could reach the besieged moon.

AKI/SPINWARD MARCHES (2035 B443987-9)

Date: 153-1119

¶ Aslan forces have crushed a bloody rebellion among the warlike Kritin faction of the ruling houses of lords.

¶ The faction's forces, led by Tyrar McTavish Kritin, forced their way into the Aslan diplomatic compound, slaughtering several dozen *ihatei* governors and their retainers. The Kritin held the compound for five days, encouraging other acts of violence against the unwelcome Aslan overlords; sporadic outbreaks of unrest wracked the entire planet during the long 87-hour night of Aki. With the help of Aslan marines, the Aorlakht recaptured the diplomatic compound, executed the Kritin captured there (including Tyrar), and brought the state of emergency under control.

¶ The unrest has, however, halted several expeditions of *ihatei* further into the remote regions of the world, and many have begun returning to the diplomatic compound seeking safety in numbers from a possibly dangerous subject population.

KAGGUSHUS/MASSILA (0402 A877A88-D)

Date: 162-1119

¶ It was reported today that elements of the 160th and 200th reserve fleets engaged and destroyed a large force loyal to the pretender Strephon. In the engagement, an enemy flagship was obliterated by missile fire, and prisoners interrogated suggest that the imposter himself may have been among its casualties. The imposter's own propaganda suggests that he would personally lead his warships, much as the true Strephon often said he would in times of great struggle.

¶ The Admiralty will not confirm the death of the imposter Strephon but suggests that careful attention be paid to his followers in the wake of this incident.

ESALIN/SPINWARD MARCHES (1004 C565673-8)

Date: 163-1119

¶ The rumored reorganization of Zhodani fleets has been further evidenced by a recent cut in the number of patrol vessels in the Esalin system.

¶ When questioned on the matter the representative of the Zhodani ambassador said, "A general reorganization of our fleets is in order, favoring newer, more powerful vessels. Older ships are being removed from active service, nothing more."

¶ Vice Admiral Thurougood, however, said the Zhodani are doing exactly the opposite, pulling modern ships out of the line and apparently replacing them with other ships. It is rumored that the Zhodani may be in the throes of an impending change of government, possibly violent, or putting down a rebellion against psionic rule.

IAASIV/HINTERWORLDS (2829 EAC3AA9-B)

Date: 179-1119

¶ Chorschuv, popular leader of Iaasiv's 33 billion inhabitants, announced today that he has completed a long-term pact with the Hiver government to build large cargo vessels to accommodate human passenger and freight service.

¶ The Hiver representatives have agreed to gradually increase the capacity of the shipyards from E to B, a process that should be completed in five years.

¶ Ships built at Iaasiv will generally be put into service along the Alike Run and the Bruia Diagonal, crewed by Iaasivans, and managed by Chorschuv for the Hiver owners. The boom to the system will probably lead to a gradual increase of local technology as well, according to the planetary accounting office.

¶ More than 500 large vessels, totalling more than 11 million tons, will be built to fill the Hiver order; the jump drives will not be built at Iaasiv but will be obtained from the Hiver Federation. Ω

Vargr eat your favorite copy? Steppe tiger destroy the last issue? Don't despair—we have more. Challenge Back Issues

25* **Traveller:** Siege by John M. Ford, Deck Plans for the Fleet Escort *Lisani*, Q-Ships, The Darrian Way of Life, Planetary Invasions, Traveller Sector Generator. **Twilight:** 2000: Twilight Miniatures Rules by Frank Chadwick, The Baltic Coast (A Loot-er's Guide).

29 **Traveller:** A Decade of Traveller, The Universal Task Profile, Scientists, Picking a Homeworld, Traveller News Service. **Twilight:** 2000: Equipment List, Weather, Inside the M1 Tank, Buildings: Optional Rules for Urban Locales. **2300 AD:** Trade in 2300, In the Cards.

30* **Traveller:** The Warehouse, Stormriders, The Fall of the Imperium, There When You Need Them. **Twilight:** 2000: Canada: 2000, Twilight: 2000 Equipment List, Shell Game. **2300 AD:** Stutterwarp, Bayern, IEX, Building the Perfect Mech.

31* **Traveller:** Hazardous Cargoes, Twisting Tech Levels, Wrong Way Valve. **MegaTraveller:** Designer's Notes. **Twilight:** 2000: USSR: 2000, Combat Examples. **2300 AD:** The Sung: Chapter 19, Spacesuits, Earth: 2300.

32* **Traveller:** A World on its Own, Swift Water by John M. Ford. **Twilight:** 2000: Equipment for Armor Crews, Native Canadian Ranger Regiment, Small Patrol Craft. **2300 AD:** Cayuga-Class Close Escort, The Xiang: Chapter 19, Papers and Passports. **Star Wars:** Alone Against the Empire (A Solitaire Adventure).

33 **Traveller:** Project Farstar, IRIS. **Twilight:** 2000: Haute Cuisine à la 2000, Twilight: 2000 Equipment List, USSR: 2000 Part II. **2300 AD:** Lone Wolf, North America 2300, Davout, Stutterwarp Revisited.

26* **Traveller:** Tournament by John Marshall, Tho Tuktaar Connection, Cargo: A Merchant Prince Variant, Striker Weapon System Revisited, Enhanced Sector Generator. **Twilight:** 2000: Twilight: 2000 Air Module.

27* **Traveller:** Grandfather's Worlds, Journalism and the Stars, Church of the Chosen Ones. **Twilight:** 2000: Target 2000: The Hit List for WWII, Twilight: 2000 Consolidated Price List, The Mexican Army, The Inland Waterway. **2300 AD:** The North American Research League.

28 **Traveller:** K'kree Starships: A Human Perspective, Across the Imperium, Double Feature, Behind the Scenes. **Twilight:** 2000: Ultralights: A Closer Look, Wilderness Travel and Pursuit, Air Module II. **2300 AD:** The Astronomischen Rechen-Institut.

35 **Traveller:** The Spice of Life, Fire Aboard Ship. **Twilight:** 2000: Citymaker. **2300 AD:** A World Invaded. **Space:** 1889: Victorian Times and Society. **BattleTech:** AFT 1B Afterburner. **Star Wars:** Team Recovery, H-Wing Fighters. **Renegade Legion:** The 9867th Renegade Armored Support. **Star Trek:** Spaceports in *Star Trek*.

36* **Traveller:** The Green Hills of Earth, Starship Design Notes. **Twilight:** Red Maple, Equipment for Armor Crews. **2300 AD:** Devil in the Dark, Anatomy of a Missile. **Space:** 1889: Darkness Falls from the Air. **Star Trek:** Doppleganger. **BattleTech:** Mech Alternatives. **Warhammer:** 40,000: Sunstroke. **Paranoia:** Plan 9 from Out-R-SPC.

37* **Traveller:** A Body Swayed to Music, Portable Air Lock. **Twilight:** 2000: Tyger, Tyger, Burning Bright. **2300 AD:** Three Blind Mice. **Space:** 1889: From Above and Below. **Warhammer:** 40,000: The Undead of Space. **Star Wars:** Wookiees Amok. **Renegade Legion:** The 982nd Pursuit Wing. **Star Trek:** Warp Factor Equivalency Tables. **Star Fleet Battles:** Border Dispute.

38 **Traveller:** Prize Court, Monitor-Class Scout. **2300 AD:** Star Cruiser Power. **Space:** 1889: Journey to Oblivion. **BattleTech:** Direct-Fire Artillery. **Star Wars:** Starfighters Down. **Star Trek:** Beta Antarae Sector. **Renegade Legion:** Commonwealth Ships.

39* **MegaTraveller:** The Hinterworlds. **Twilight:** 2000: Rifle River. **2300 AD:** The American Marines, French Lieutenant's Connection. **Space:** 1889: Ether Ship Etiquette. **BattleTech:** Sky Eyes, The Waco Rangers—An In-Depth Look.

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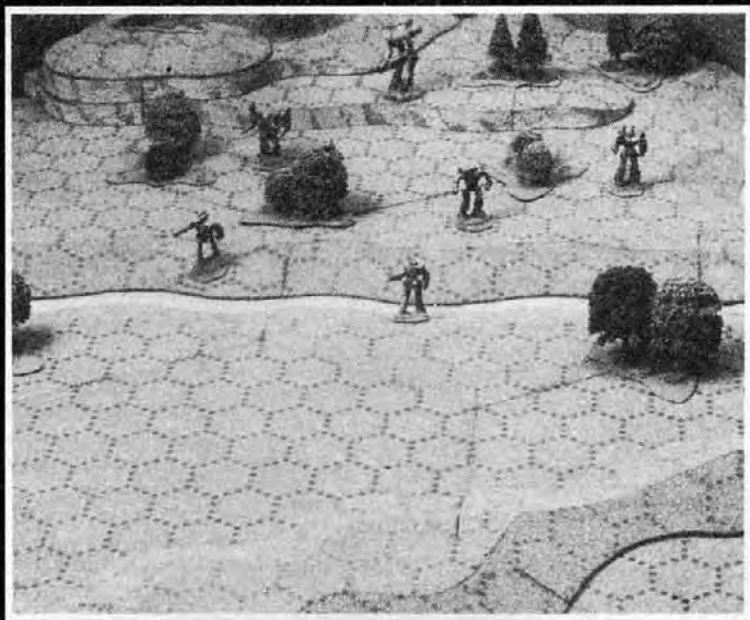
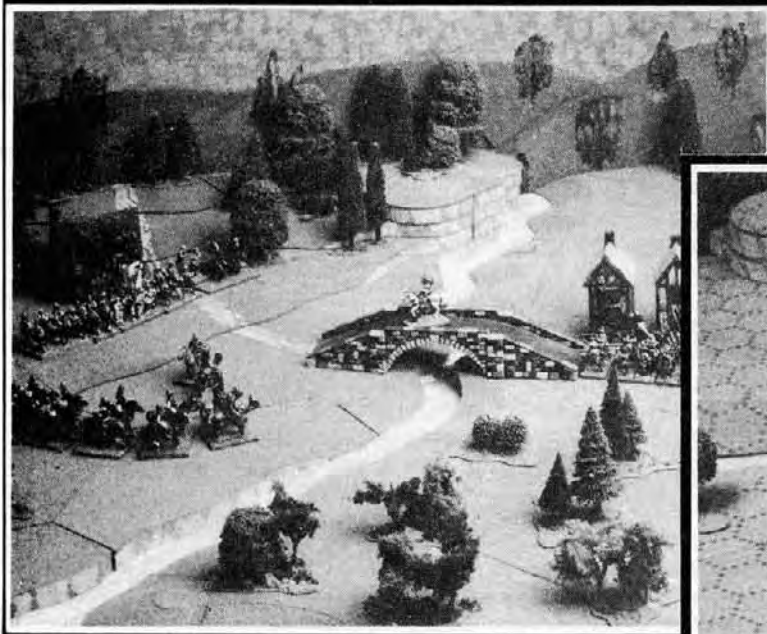
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The Madlash

Kevin Shriver

The Madlash is a prairie-dwelling grazer native to Argol, an arid world noted for its large herbivores. The species, long considered a nuisance by Argol's farmers, has recently received legal protection from the Argol Council of Nobles. Business interests have established herds on several other planets because the creature's oily hide makes an excellent leather.

A muscular tail with a row of horny spikes running along either side is the madlash's most prominent feature. It is a thick-set, warm-blooded quadruped with a beaked face, sensitive ears, and a short temper.

There are two genders. Madlashes mate with several partners each breeding season. During this time, coloration changes from tawny brown to slate gray. Herds migrate to rockier nursery grounds, where females battle for a limited number of nursery pits. These spectacular battles, in which the females madly lash at one another with their tails, are the origin of the beasts' name. A female will bear one to four young. Lactating mothers will care for any calves that happens to be nearby, not just their own.

Madlashes secrete an oily mucus from their eyes, nostrils, and throat to remove the fine dust that permeates Argol's atmosphere. When they aren't eating they spend most of their time cleaning each other with their long tongues. When the herd is threatened, adults encircle the calves with tails facing outward. Few of Argol's predators will brave this deadly

ring. In addition to self-defense and mating functions, the powerful tail is used to dig shallow pits where herd members huddle together for warmth at night. Madlashes also dig for salt and for minerals necessary to grow stout tail spikes.

Madlashes will go to great lengths to keep warm. They sometimes bed down for the night with other herbivore species who tolerate them because the digging exposes edible roots, grubs, minerals, and, occasionally, water. Madlash diggings become ponds during the brief rainy season which also attract other species.

Unfortunately, the qualities that make the madlash an attractive companion for other animals lead to humorous and dangerous interactions with human colonists. In addition to destroying crops, Madlashes have been known to cuddle up to the warm vehicles and prairie dwellings with disastrous results. One widely circulated story tells of a scout who chased a warmth-seeking madlash from his campsite. When he returned from prospecting late the next day, the scout discovered that the offended madlash had sneaked back to the unguarded camp and demolished his ATV.

Adventurers may encounter the madlash in the drier portions of medium-sized worlds (UPP codes 5 or 6) which have standard or standard tainted atmospheres (UPP codes 6 or 7).

Type: Grazer Size: 1600 kg Hits: 39/11 Wounds: 22 Weaponry: Thrasher Armor: None Characteristics: F8 A2 S2. Ω



David Nilsen

2300AD Macrocombat

The 2300 macrocombat system is designed to allow quick, realistic resolution of battles on a larger scale than the role-playing combat rules allow. This system is based on the 2300 AD combat rules and gives the same kind of results as would the role-playing system, but it is less time-consuming and complex.

Scale: Macrocombat is intended for use with either miniatures or a hex grid. The standard unit of distance is 100 meters. Depending upon the scale of the miniatures used, 100 meters can be any scale length. On a hex grid, 100 meters will be the size of each hex. For simplicity, the 100-meter unit will be hereafter referred to as a hex.

Unit size is one vehicle or one to eight personnel.

Unit Values: These can be recorded on an off-map index card or written on homemade counters. They are computed from 2300 AD values as follows.

Unit Quality: Average the Coolness Under Fire or primary skill (e.g., Ground Vehicle for vehicle crews or Combat Rifleman for infantry) and compare it to the NPC Table to establish experience level. The referee must decide on a case-by-case basis whether skill or Coolness is more relevant. Low Coolness/high skill units might be placed at an intermediate level. If using Coolness, add appropriate levels of component personnel and round to nearest whole number.

NPC TABLE

Level	Experience
1-4	Green
5-6	Experienced
7-8	Veteran
9-10	Elite

Movement Factor: For vehicles this is four times the 2300 AD movement in meters per action. Multiply this figure by 1.2 for Experienced units, 1.4 for Veteran units, and 1.6 for Elite units. Round to the nearest 100 meters (exact figures can be retained for miniatures combat). Walkers move as vehicles, but they omit the experience modifiers. For foot units, movement is one hex walking, two hexes running.

Attack: For 2300 AD, use the DPV from the unit's primary weapon. All personnel in one unit must use the same primary weapon, although individuals may possess secondary antivehicle or antiaircraft missiles.

Range: For 2300 AD, use the effective range from the unit's primary weapon.

Defense: This is the same as 2300 AD armor.

Signature: As in 2300 AD.

Missile Values: These values include range, homing value, and an evasion for vehicle targets, and are the same as in 2300 AD.

Size: Size, used in reference to units on foot only, is a value from one to eight.

Sequence of Play: The sequence of play consists of an initiative phase and two player-turns per turn. At the beginning of the game each player rolls one die and adds the Tactics skill of the commander of his force. In addition, the defender adds one if he is defending on familiar terrain, while the designated attacker always adds two. The winner has the initiative, and each turn chooses whether to take his turn first or second. This way he can choose to take two turns in a row, exploiting a breakthrough or the like.

During the initiative phase of each subsequent turn, the attacker rolls one die. On a roll of one, it is time to roll for initiative again, but without the attacker's +2 bonus.

Initiative can change back and forth any number of times.

Each player-turn consists of three phases.

● **First Attack Phase:** The player may fire with any of his units.

● **Movement Phase:** The player may move any of his units, provided those that fired in the first attack phase move no more than half their MPs. His opponent may conduct reaction fire against them.

● **Final Attack Phase:** The player may fire with any of his units which did not fire in the first attack phase and moved no more than half their MPs in the movement phase.

Thus any unit may fire/move half, move half/fire, move full, or fire only. Any unit that does not move in a player-turn is eligible to conduct reaction fire in the following enemy player-turn.

Movement: One movement point is expended per hex entered. Some hexes cost more and are listed below.

● **Urban, Woods, Broken, Rough:** +2 MPs.

● **Crossing Stream at Ford:** +1 MP for tracked and wheeled, +0 MP for ACV.

● **Crossing River for ACV:** +1 MP.

Vehicles may drive evasively; this allows them to elude attacks from missiles. An evading vehicle moves at one-half its movement points (actually zigzagging a lot and wasting movement points) and uses its evasion rating as listed in 2300 AD.

Detection: Some units must be detected before they can be attacked. These include units in covering terrain—woods and towns—which have not fired from that position, or targets, such as aircraft, beyond visual range. Sensors can detect a target within their listed range on a roll of 10+; this is modified by the signature of the unit being detected and the sensor's own quality. At half range or less, 6+ is required.

Fire Combat: A unit can conduct fire combat during the first or final attack phase of its own player-turn, or during the movement phase of the enemy player-turn (reaction fire). A unit that is to fire in its own player-turn can only move one-half its movement points during its movement phase. Infantry (foot) units are an exception; they can move two hexes during a player-turn and still conduct area fire, although at a disadvantage. A unit that is to fire reaction fire during the enemy movement phase must not have moved at all in the immediately preceding player-turn.

The criteria for success in fire combat is the quality of the unit. Find the starting column of the Direct Fire Hit Table on page 38 for the unit's quality (for example, an Elite unit starts on column 3L). Then move left or right the number of columns indicated below.

- Infantry Unit Firing While Moving: 2 right.
- Target Erect in Open: 2 left.
- Target in Partial Cover: 2 right.
- Long Range: 2 right.
- Area Fire: 2 left (at one-half range, normal, or long range only).
- Target at Half Range: 2 left.
- Firing Unit Suppressed or Pinned: 2 right.

Infantry fire from the move includes firing while riding atop a vehicle, or riding inside a vehicle with firing ports or open sides.

Targets in partial cover consist of those taking advantage of defensive terrain. They include walking infantry, a sup-

2300AD

pressed or pinned unit, or any unit fulfilling the criteria for reaction fire. Other units, even if in covering terrain, are not considered in the cover unless they fulfill the above criteria.

Roll 1D10. If one or two hits are indicated, go to the Personnel Casualty Table on page 36 if firing on infantry, or to the Vehicle Damage table on page 38, and roll again.

For the Personnel Casualty Table, choose the column that corresponds to the target's defense subtracted from the firer's



DPV. Then roll for damage inflicted, and add or subtract DMs to the die roll as appropriate. (See the list of DMs at the bottom of the Personnel Casualty Table.) In the case of adding per size of target unit less than 4, for example, a target unit with size 2 would add two to the die roll ($4-2=2$).

A suppression result indicates the unit stops what it is doing for the rest of the turn (including movement if the hit result is caused by reaction fire during its movement phase). It may only fire in response to the unit which damaged it, and that at 2R shift.

Pinned units are suppressed for one complete turn and may not move; they can fire, but at 2L.

Quality level loss indicates the immediate reduction of the unit to the troop quality level one step immediately below its previous level (e.g., Elite is reduced to Veteran, Experienced to Green). This takes place immediately. Units which are not suppressed by reaction fire might still be prevented from completing their planned movement as their movement points are reduced by quality loss. Units which lose a quality level are automatically suppressed.

Attempting reaction fire requires that a unit spend the previous friendly turn not moving and setting up a covered firing position. It may then fire once at any enemy unit that moves within range in the ensuing enemy movement phase, interrupting the enemy unit's movement at any opportune moment. An exception to this rule is antiaircraft fire. Due to the speeds involved, aircraft will often only appear during the enemy movement phase. Any unit with antiaircraft missiles

may conduct antiaircraft reaction fire at this time.

Some infantry units carry secondary weapons, such as anti-vehicle or antiaircraft missile launchers. These weapons may be fired at any time in addition to other fire or movement at no penalty.

Antivehicle fire takes armor face into account. Compare the line of fire to the target's current line of travel to see which face is impacted. Ordnance fired from above (from aircraft or vehicles at higher elevation) may strike a vehicle's overhead armor; overhead attack-angle missiles do so in all cases.

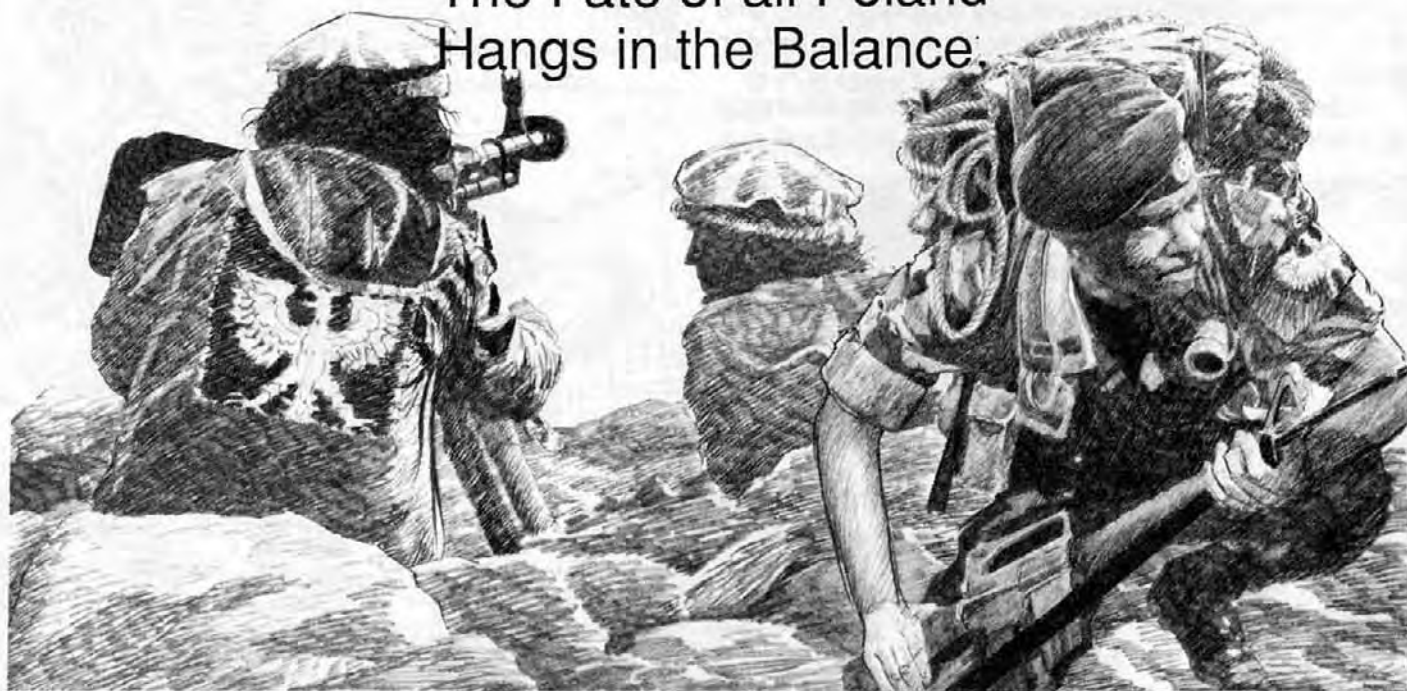
Ammunition Supply (Optional): For increased realism and complexity, ammunition supplies can be accounted for. Basically, each unit carries 15 "shots" worth of ammunition. Each time a unit conducts full automatic area fire, it expends three shots worth of ammo.

Indirect Fire Combat: Indirect fire involves calling in (usually off-map) artillery or air strikes. Forward observing units on the map that have direct visual or sensor observation of the target can do this. Using the troop quality of the unit doing the forward observing, roll on the Direct Fire Hit Table and shift 2R.

If a hit on a vehicle, damage is resolved normally on an upper surface.

If the hit is on an infantry unit, it is on that unit in particular, but other units in the same hex or neighboring hexes may take collateral damage (see below). Find the EP value of the warhead, and (from the Indirect Fire Combat Table) find its automatic and total concussion, and primary and second-

The Fate of all Poland Hangs in the Balance.



The Grand Culmination
of the Return to Europe series!
White Eagle—coming in January 1990.

PERSONNEL CASUALTY TABLE

Part 1

Modified Roll	(DPV - Armor Level)									
	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1
-3	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
-2	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
-1	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
0	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
1	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
2	S	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	P	P
3	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	P
4	S	S	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	P
5	S	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	PQ	PQ
6	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	PQ	PQ	PQ
7	S	S	P	P	P	P	P	PQ	PQ	PQ
8	S	P	P	P	P	P	PQ	PQ	PQ	QL
9	S	P	P	P	PQ	PQ	PQ	PQ	QL	QL
10	S	P	P	PQ	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL
11	P	P	P	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL
12	P	P	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL
13	P	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL
14+	P	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	DE

Part 2

Modified Roll	Table 2 (DPV – Armor Level)											
	1.2	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.2	2.6	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.6	3.7	4.0+
-3	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
-2	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
-1	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
0	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
1	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
2	P	P	PQ	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL
3	P	PQ	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL
4	PQ	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL
5	PQ	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL
6	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	DE
7	PQ	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	DE	DE	DE
8	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	DE	DE	DE	DE	DE	DV
9	QL	QL	QL	QL	QL	DE	DE	DE	DV	DV	DV	DA
10	QL	QL	QL	DE	DE	DV	DV	DV	DA	DA	DA	DA
11	QL	QL	DE	DV	DV	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA
12	QL	DE	DV	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA
13	DE	DV	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA
14+	DV	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA	DA

Abbreviations: S: Unit rolls for suppression for the remainder of the turn on 1D10: Green, 4+; Experienced, 6+; Veteran, 8+; Elite, 10+. P: Unit automatically suppressed, roll for pin for one full turn: Green, 3+; Experienced, 5+; Veteran, 7+; Elite, 9+. PQ: Automatic pin and possible quality loss. Roll to avoid loss of one troop quality level: Green, 3+; Experienced, 5+; Veteran, 7+; Elite, 9+. QL: Unit loses one troop quality level. If of Green quality, the unit is destroyed outright. The unit is also suppressed for the remainder of the turn. DE: Experienced units and below are destroyed outright. DV: Veteran units and below are destroyed outright. DA: Any unit is destroyed outright.

Die Roll Modifiers: +1 if target unit Experienced or Veteran; +2 if target unit Elite; +size of firing unit more than 4; +size of target unit less than 4; -size of target unit more than 4; +1 for each previous quality loss.

secondary fragmentation radii (for miniatures), or coverage percentages (in 100-meter hexes). These figures show the amount of a 100-meter hex covered by each round of the warhead in question. The Indirect Fire Combat Table lists EP range, automatic and general concussion radii, primary and secondary fragmentation radii in meters, coverage percentage of a single hex by the automatic concussion and general concussion (exclusive of the coverage already counted in automatic concussion), and primary and secondary fragmentation effects, not including the coverage already counted against automatic concussion.

If the unit in question is hit, apply the automatic concussion (or general concussion if there is no automatic concussion) or primary fragmentation effects to it.

Even if the fire mission misses, deviation might still leave the unit within the area of effect (if it lands in the same hex, see Deviation on page 39).

To use the Indirect Fire Combat Table, find any units in the

same hex as the targeted unit, and roll 2D10 for a percentage to see if these units are within certain lethality areas. Compare the one-time percentage roll to the coverage list to see which areas a unit falls within. Note that each unit can be in one of each concussion and fragmentation area, but not two of each. Thus, in the example of an EP 8 shell, a unit rolls 15%. This unit would be outside the automatic concussion area but still in the general concussion area ($4 < 15 < 25$), and within the primary fragmentation radius ($15 < 16$). A unit which rolled 3% would be within both automatic concussion and primary fragmentation; a unit which rolled 20% would be within general concussion and secondary fragmentation ($16 < 20 < 64$); a unit which rolled 65% would be free of all effects.

These computations are easier for miniatures, as they involve a simple measurement from the impact point to the physical location of the unit.

The effect of automatic concussion is the immediate de-

DIRECT FIRE HIT TABLE

Roll	7L	6L	5L	4L	(El) 3L	(Vt) 2L	(Ex) 1L	(Gr) 00	1R	2R	3R
1	H	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	H	H	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	H	H	H	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	H	H	H	H	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	H	H	H	H	H	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	H	H	H	H	H	H	—	—	—	—	—
7	2H	H	H	H	H	H	H	—	—	—	—
8	2H	2H	H	H	H	H	H	H	—	—	—
9	2H	2H	2H	H	H	H	H	H	H	—	—
10	2H	2H	2H	2H	H	H	H	H	H	H	—

VEHICLE DAMAGE TABLE

Roll	-0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26+
1	—	—	—	—	DA	DM	DA
2	—	—	—	DA	DM	DA	DM
3	—	—	DA	DM	DA	DM	X
4	—	DA	DM	DA	DM	X	X
5	—	DM	DA	DM	X	X	X
6	—	DA	DM	X	X	X	X
7	—	DM	X	X	X	X	X
8	DM*	X	X	X	X	X	X
9	DM*	X	X	X	X	X	X
10	DM*	X	X	X	X	X	X

INDIRECT FIRE COMBAT TABLE

EP	Radii	Coverage
1	0m/10m/5m/10m	0%/4%/1%/4%
2	0m/15m/10m/20m	0%/9%/4%/16%
3-6	5m/20m/15m/30m	1%/16%/9%/36%
7-12	10m/25m/20m/40m	4%/25%/16%/64%
13-24	15m/30m/25m/50m	9%/36%/25%/100%
25-48	20m/35m/30m/60m	16%/49%/36%/144%
49-96	25m/40m/35m/70m	25%/40%/49%/196%
97-192	30m/45m/40m/80m	36%/81%/64%/256%
193-384	35m/50m/45m/90m	49%/100%/81%/324%
385-768	40m/55m/50m/100m	64%/121%/100%/400%

Direct Fire Hit Table Abbreviations: *H*: Hit, consult Personnel Casualty or Vehicle Damage Table. *2H*: Two hits, consult Personnel Casualty or Vehicle Damage Table twice. *—*: Miss. *El*, *Vt*, *Ex*, *Gr*: Nonshifted starting columns for Elite, Veteran, Experienced, and Green quality units.

Vehicle Damage Table Abbreviations: *—*: Superficial hit, no effect. *DA*: Damaged, armament. Main armament destroyed. *DM*: Damaged, mobility. Ability to move destroyed. *DM**: If DPV is greater than suspension armor value, ability to move is destroyed. *X*: Vehicle completely destroyed.

struction of the unit within the area.

General concussion automatically suppresses any units in its area of effect and forces them to roll for pinned status as in fire combat, above.

Units within primary fragmentation radius roll for a +1 attack (plus other applicable DMs) on the 0.4 column of the Personnel Casualty Table.

In the case of multiple rounds, the shells land in a pattern designed to cover as much area as possible; add five meters to each over one. For coverage, square the new radius, then divide by 2500. If the forward observer roll fails, the round(s) will deviate a number of hexes in the direction indicated by a D6.

DEVIATION

Die Roll	Hexes
1-2	0 hexes (it lands in the same hex but is not a direct hit on the unit in question)
3-5	1 hex
6	2 hexes

Note that if laser designation is used or if the attacking ordinance was homing missiles, deviation is unlikely. Laser designation takes a 6L shift on the Direct Fire Hit Table on page 38.

Wasps: Wide-area saturation projectiles use the indirect fire rules, as above, but have a single radius of effect and no concussion. Personnel units within the radius (coverage = $\text{radius}^2/2500$) of effect take a -4 attack on the DPV 4 column of the Personnel Casualty Table, while vehicles take an attack on the appropriate column of the Vehicle Damage Table.

Missile Fire: A unit whose primary armament is a missile, or an infantry unit which carries an auxiliary missile, may fire it as part of the fire phase or in reaction. Use the values given in **2300 AD** for homing, range, and evasion. If a hit is scored, roll for damage on the Vehicle Damage Table.

Plasma Guns: These fortunately rare weapons introduce a complication to the game. Any unit equipped with plasma guns fires direct fire on the DPV 4 column of the Personnel Casualty Table, and in addition does blast damage as per indirect fire rules. Plasma guns have EP of 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 15. Roll fragmentation using these values, but roll concussion effects using the next lower line.

Melee Combat: Melee occurs only when two opposing units are in the same hex. Each rolls on its starting column for troop quality on the Direct Fire Hit Table, then rolls normally for personnel casualties but cuts the number in half. This is done simultaneously for both sides each attack phase until one unit has broken.

Grenades: Any infantry unit adjacent to an enemy unit may elect to add grenades to its attack, if its to hit roll (rolled as direct fire using troop quality) is successful. The unit may add a 2 EP indirect fire attack on its opponents. Such attacks may only be made twice per game.

Notes: The **2300 AD** macrocombat system places PCs and NPCs on equal footing, while the role-playing rules give

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the advantage to PCs. Certain vehicle-mounted direct-fire weapons listed in **2300 AD** can be used against infantry using the indirect fire burst rules. If they perform direct fire, they use the Direct Fire Hit Table as normal.

SCENARIOS

The following section presents five **2300 AD** scenarios for use with macrocombat rules. The referee should create maps using the information provided.



HOLDING ACTION FOR THE SCRAMJET STRIP

Texan forces must retrieve or preserve from destruction expensive equipment in place at the dry lakebed strip. A portable control tower and refueling facilities, all trailer mounted, and six electronic beacons must be snatched from the advancing Ebers.

Texas Forces: Defending familiar ground; all start in marked spot.

Vehicles: Three utility Ranger Riders and one APC, each with LMG.

Personnel: Eight Texas highway patrolmen (Veteran NPCs) and eight colonial rangers (Experienced NPCs) armed with Type-79 assault rifles and armor 1.

Eber Forces: Attacking; start from marked spot.

Vehicles: 24 horses.

Personnel: 200 mature Eber warriors, 21 subchiefs, and three chiefs, all armed with javelins and napalm grenades, plus lances for the subchiefs and chiefs.

Special Rules

A Texas truck must spend one turn stationary beside a beacon to retrieve it and one turn beside any of the three trailers to hook it up to the truck. Only one trailer can be pulled per truck, and speed is reduced to 70 percent of normal values when one is hitched. The dry lakebed is considered smooth enough for the trucks to use their maximum road speed at all times. Ebers must spend one turn stationary beside an object to destroy it. Eber javelins and grenades have range of 528 meters; javelins have DPV 1.1 thrown using direct fire; lances have DPV 4 and move at the speed of a horse; and napalm does DPV 1.5 and uses indirect fire. Use these values for all subsequent scenarios below.

Victory: The Texans must retrieve the three trailers and six beacons and get them off the east map edge. The Ebers must prevent the Texans from doing so by destroying the equipment or preventing it from being retrieved.

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY

A Black Sky locomotive pulling construction equipment and work crews is ambushed by a raiding party 12 kilometers west of New Austin. It is defended by three Texans, who have called for help, which is on its way.

Texas Forces: Defending.

Vehicles: One primitive locomotive towing 10 cars.

Personnel: Four locomotive crewmembers (noncombatant NPCs); 20 construction Ebers (equivalent to Youthful NPCs) armed with hammers, picks, shovels, crowbars, etc. (long weapons, DPV 0.3 to 0.6); and three highway patrolmen (Veteran NPCs) armed with Type-79 assault rifles.

Eber Forces: Attacking.

Vehicles: 12 horses, plus 12 additional horses each three turns.

Personnel: 12 mature Eber warriors waiting for the train to pass through; 12 additional Eber warriors mounted on horses appear to the east each three turns. All are armed with javelins and knives.

Reinforcements: On turn five, two Ranger Riders, each with an LMG, arrive on the east edge of the map, carrying four highway patrolmen (Veteran NPCs) and eight colonial rangers (Experienced NPCs) armed with Type-79 assault rifles.

Special Rules: The train, heavily loaded, can only manage 20 kph (3 MP) at game's start. No map is provided; the terrain is rolling hills, except for the train's tracks. The train always moves straight east on the track at top speed, which increases one hex each two turns to a maximum of 9. It has armor 2 all around; the cars have armor 0.3. The Ranger Riders will be moving at their halved cross-country speed.

The train is only one hex long, but for purposes of melee on board, consider each car a separate hex. The roll for Eber units to jump from horse to train and then from car to car is treated as fire combat on the Direct Fire Hit Table according to their troop type (*Youthful*: Green *Mature*: Experienced *Subchief*: Veteran *Chief*: Elite). Hitting the locomotive with lances is treated the same way.

Victory: The Ebers will try to run their horses alongside the train to jump across or to charge the locomotive with lances. The train must make it to New Austin.

SQUATTERS' RIGHTS

A group of Ebers has moved overnight into New Austin's outer, unprotected fields. In the morning, the Texans try to drive them out to retrieve their crops for the coming siege.

Texas Forces: Attacking over familiar ground; all start on the north map edge.

Vehicles: Two APC Ranger Riders with LMGs.

Personnel: Eight highway patrolmen (Veteran NPCs) armed with Type-79 assault rifles, 16 colonial rangers (Green NPCs) armed with FC-70s.

Eber Forces: Defending; all start in the center of the map.

Vehicles: 40 horses.

Personnel: 240 mature Eber warriors, 12 sub-chiefs, and four chiefs, armed with javelins, napalm grenades, and lances. Also 24 porters.

Special Rules: The Ebers were just waking up, so they fight at one left column shift for the first three turns. Each porter can resupply four Ebers who are out of one type of ammunition (grenade or javelin).

Victory: The Texans must drive the Ebers from their fields. The Ebers must inflict severe casualties (50 percent) on the Texans and avoid being destroyed themselves.

UP AGAINST THE WALL

The southern wild Ebers have massed for an attack against New Austin itself. The Texans are defending from the earthen flood-control levees that surround the city.

Texas Forces: Defending on familiar ground.

Vehicles: One utility and one APC Ranger Rider with LMGs.

Personnel: Eight highway patrolmen (Veteran NPCs) and 12 colonial rangers (Veteran NPCs) armed with Type-79 assault rifles; 24 colonial rangers (Veteran NPCs) armed with FC-70s; four colonial rangers (Veteran NPCs) armed with Rockwell 12-81s and Type-81 storm guns; 80 colonial rang-

ers (Green NPCs) armed with Traylor Model 10s and SS-7s. Also 10 claymore mines emplaced prior to game start.

Eber Forces: Attacking.

Vehicles: 40 horses.

Personnel: 576 mature Eber warriors, 32 subchiefs, and eight chiefs, armed with javelins, napalm grenades, hook spears, and lances. Also 80 porters.

Special Rules: The levees are earth piled over reinforced concrete forms, and have an armor value of well over 4. The gate takes one turn to open and one turn to close in addition to any time taken for units to pass through. It can easily be opened from the inside, even by Ebers. Ebers can scale the earthen wall to its crest by spending two turns next to it. During that time they cannot be hit by humans except those who stand exposed atop the wall to shoot straight down. Each Porter can resupply four Ebers who are out of one type of ammo (javelin or grenade).

Victory: The Ebers must get past the wall; the Texans must prevent this.

THE RELIEF OF MRS. JOHNSON'S HOUSE

Mrs. Johnson and her nine sons are surrounded on their farm by a tribe of Ebers, but they are holding out in their house. They must be rescued.

Texas Forces: Defending familiar ground; all start inside the house.

Vehicles: One improved Explorer ATV (armor all around 2) modified into a tractor and bulldozer, in the shed.

Personnel: One Elite NPC (Mrs. Johnson), two Veteran

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NPCs (Bert and Bubba), and seven Experienced NPCs (Bart, Bobby Joe, Billy Bob, Boone, Boyce, Brad, and Biff) armed with Traylor Model 10s, FC-70s, and one Rockwell 12-81.

Eber Forces: Attacking; all start surrounding the building.

Vehicles: 12 horses.

Personnel: 160 mature Eber warriors, 10 subchiefs, and two chiefs, armed with javelins and napalm grenades. The chiefs also have lances.

Reinforcements: Two utility Ranger Riders with four highway patrolmen (Experienced NPCs) and 10 colonial rangers (Experienced NPCs), all armed with Type-79 assault rifles, appear on the edge of the map on turn 5.

Special Rules: The farmhouse is a heavy concrete blockhouse, armor 0.5. It takes five turns for the Ebers to burn it down. The ATV in the shed is unarmed but does 10 DPV crushing damage if it runs over anyone. Bert or Bubba must get to the shed to drive it.

Victory: The Johnsons must survive. The Ebers must burn their house to the ground. Ω

FANTASY ROLE PLAYING BY MAIL: YOU direct a party of up to fifteen fighters and magic users (humans, elves, dwarves, fairies, gremlins, even trolls) through a dungeon maze killing monsters, gathering treasure, and hunting for magical prizes.

There are currently six levels (ultimately there will be nine) and over 400 players already exploring the depths. This game has been extensively play-tested, and has been running since 1982. The per turn fee is only \$2.50 and for this one fee you get to move all 15 of your characters. They can stay together or split up into several parties moving in different directions, all for one single turn fee! No "extra action fees" ever. Our game is completely computer-run, so no human referee interferes with your enjoyment, and there are seldom any errors. (If we DO make an error on your turn, we will refund DOUBLE your turn fee!)

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In any time period when unbridled economic and colonial expansion outruns governmental authority to oversee or protect it, some individuals will find it easier to take advantage of others' honest labor with some dishonest labor of their own.

And so, just as the people of the late-15th and early-16th centuries on Earth found themselves learning the meaning of the words "buccaneer" and "freebooter," and what was meant by the "sweet trade," the far flung colonies of the nations of Earth are relearning the effect of piracy on commerce in the early part of the 24th century.

PIRATE SYNDICATES

Just as pirates of centuries back found it convenient to band together to increase their profits at selling time by allowing for greater amounts of cargo to be taken, so too do the space hijackers of modern days come together for mutual support. This has led to the development of well managed organizations known as pirate syndicates, which account for the majority of space hijacking today.

Similar to the organized crime families of the 20th century, pirate syndicates are close-knit organizations designed for the purpose of supporting a small fleet of vessels in their operations against free commerce. The "family" aspect becomes even more noticeable when one realizes that most members of pirate syndicates, especially those more closely involved with the actual hijacking of the vessels, are brought in by word of mouth by someone in the organization. The term "sweet offer" refers to the initial approach made by a syndicate member to a prospective pirate.

A pirate syndicate is formed when a person or group of persons comes up with the initial investment money to start the organization. This money is used

to modify available ships, acquire stores and supplies, and bribe the necessary government officials. Such individuals normally come from two different sources. One source of sponsorship is a criminal organization wishing to expand its base of operations. A notable example is that of AmeriCo, the American-based, one-time cosmetic company, which now serves as a front for a wide range of smuggling operations in the American Arm of explored space. It is now widely held among law enforcement and naval officials that AmeriCo sponsors one of the largest pirate syndicates operating in the Chinese Arm. It is believed that AmeriCo uses its pirate syndicate to help find markets for

what they cannot afford to buy. In such a fashion a government-controlled black market for these goods can be created. These syndicates also allow local governors to make limited war on the shipping of rival countries. Note the difference between piracy, the unrestricted attack of space-going vessels of any nationality, and privateering, which is the operation against the shipping of a specific country or countries during a time of war, sanctioned by a Letter of Marque.

When one's vessel is being boarded and one's cargo is being stolen, the difference is often one of semantics. At one time the government of Indonesia adopted a policy of supporting such syn-

dicates as a means to limit the expansion of rival nations and make a place for itself in space.

It learned to regret this policy when the major space-going nations banded together in an unwritten agreement to limit the Indonesian presence in space. Now the legacy of this ill-conceived course of action is the

The Sweet Trade in Space: *Piracy*

Erick Melton

its smuggling operations, and to take advantage of the lucrative potential of the "three-armed trade" upon which most pirate operations are based (this will be discussed later).

The other group from which sponsors can be found are, ironically, the business communities and local governments of the colonies. This is especially true of those colonies which operate under some type of space trade act which limits their trade with goods manufactured by the owning country or carried on ships owned and licensed by the owning country.

Under such restrictions certain items, such as luxury goods and high-tech components not manufactured by the country on Earth which controls the colony, can become exorbitantly expensive. Traders and colonial officials circumvent this problem by sponsoring small pirate syndicates to basically steal

fact that even today most captured pirate vessels are of Indonesian registry; and despite having a supply of tantalum and a small space-going fleet, Indonesia has yet to establish a successful colony in space.

Once the syndicate is established, its first move is to create some sort of front company or organization to display to the public. If the sponsors are linked to a colonial government, they usually operate as a freight company with a license to carry government stores. Independent sponsors will set up a trading house, or merchant banking arrangement, usually located in the business section of the main spaceport facility. This allows them easy access to their vessels, while keeping a lookout for potential targets, and monitoring the presence of revenue cutters or pirate suppression forces from the local navy.

AREAS OF OPERATION

Once established, the business of the syndicate can be broken down into three areas of operation—the acquisition of goods, their transfer and sale, and the support of the ships in the field.

Catch and Carry

The means most favored by syndicates today is the use of two vessels assigned to support one another. Called "catch and carry" teams, the vessels are assigned specific roles in the process of running down a target and getting its cargo to a friendly port.

The "catch" vessel is a small, well armed vessel, usually a modified courier capable of atmospheric landing. These vessels display the characteristics of maneuverability, speed, and low detection profile. With the addition of a high-intensity laser, they are usually more than capable of handling the average unarmed freighter. Contrary to modern military doctrine, most catch vessels do not opt for a missile system as their primary weapon: The objective of the catch vessel is not to destroy the target vessel, but to capture it and its cargo intact. The more damage done to a cargo ship, the greater the chance of the cargo being damaged or destroyed, and the less profit that will be made. Pirate captains will try to target the cargo ship's power plant or stutterwarp unit. Missile systems are too powerful and are launched from too great a distance to allow for such precise firing. Some catch vessel captains do, however, equip themselves with two or three detonation laser missiles to help them escape in the event of pursuit by the authorities. Even then it is usually seen as a last act of defiance, as most naval vessels assigned to piracy suppression patrol are far better equipped, and their crews far better trained, for the pirate vessel to have much of a chance of victory in an even fight. Catch ships will have enlarged remote pilot stations to handle the control of additional sensor drones. These are used to help the catch ship spot potential targets and monitor the activity of local naval patrols.

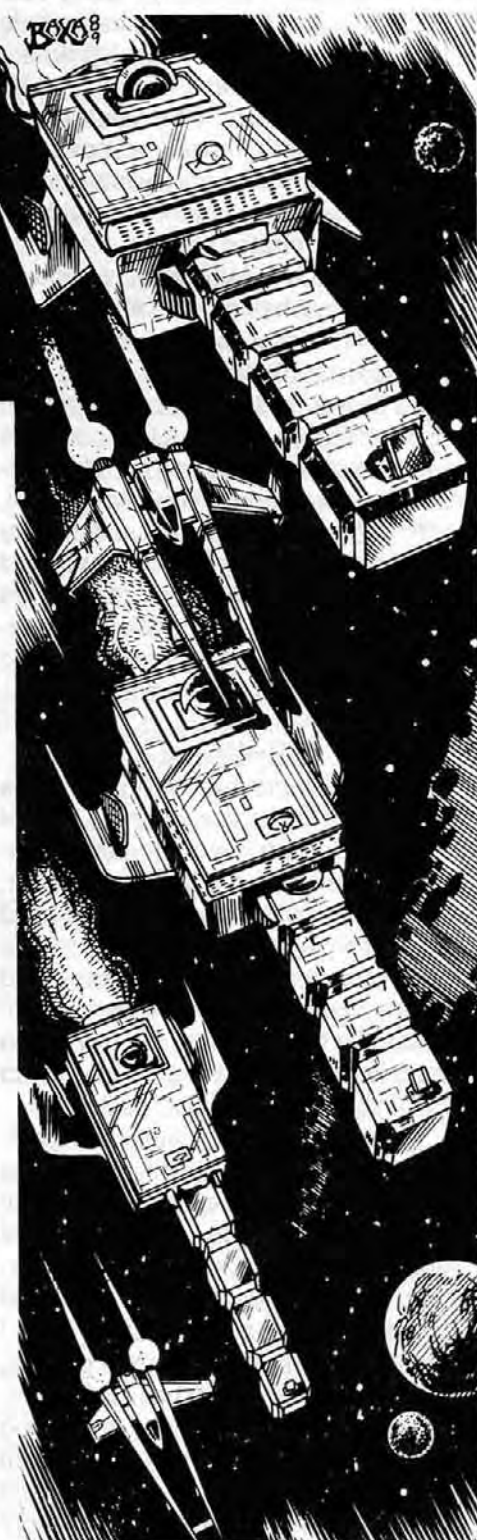
The "carry" vessel is a standard light freighter. The *Maiduguiri*-class freighter



is one favorite among the pirate syndicates. Its quickness allows it to close with a subdued vessel, remove the cargo, and leave the system in a relatively short amount of time. In addition, its ability to support up to 51 persons allows for extra personnel needed to board and control the target vessel. Carry ships are usually provided with a larger power plant and/or stutterwarp unit. Other common modifications are extra masking to the hull to lower its signature, the addition of hydrogen

**Just as pirates
of centuries back
found it convenient
to band together
to increase
their profits
at selling time,
so too do
the space hijackers
of modern days
come together for
mutual support.**

2300AD



cracking gear and extra fuel storage space, and the carrying of spare parts and portable repair frames to act as a make-shift tender to the catch vessel. The last is an important aspect of the carry vessel's job, as the catch vessel is usually limited in the number of port facilities it can visit safely. Carry vessels will have a semiregular trade route to run and will often carry legitimate cargo. Their primary function is to be able to move in when the catch vessel has acquired a target, remove the captured cargo, and quickly return to assigned space lanes before any aid can come to the pirated ship.

Dividing the work load between two such vessels has several advantages. The catch vessel doesn't have to allow for excess room for stolen goods. Nor does it need to worry about the loss in drive efficiency when such goods have been taken, and the need for a fast getaway is paramount. The carry vessel, with its larger storage space, can carry a much greater portion of a captured vessel's cargo, thereby increasing the profit margin on an expedition. If operated with care, the carry vessel can also spy out potential targets while in port.

Spikers

Another means by which syndicates will bring a target vessel under control is by putting their own personnel on-board before the ship leaves port. Called "spikers," after the much-used tactic of "spiking" the target vessel's life support system to render all on-board unconscious, these individuals will infiltrate the target vessel and attempt to disable the ship and/or crew in order to make the intercept much easier.

They are the most specialized members of a pirate syndicate, having few space crew skills beyond some basic training in ship drive and power plant engineering, while specializing in various forms of armed and unarmed combat, forgery, and infiltration. Arrest reports indicate that there is a growing trend among spikers to have their nervous systems "hardened" by implanting computer interface ports in their system and micro processors in their cerebral cortex. These chips will have a variety

of programs used to override security programs guarding access to more sensitive parts of the ship and to prevent drive monitoring computers from detecting unauthorized access. Areas of their bodies have also been modified to carry some of the tools and devices needed for their job.

The purpose of all this is to combat the growing trend among ship operators to have any material which could be used in such a fashion held in storage for the duration of the flight.

How spikers get on-board the target vessel usually depends on the situation at hand. Posing as a passenger is a standard approach. Hiring on as a ship hand is another option, although new crewmembers are normally kept under close scrutiny. However, if a ship finds itself short due to the sudden disappearance or injury of a shipmate, an event all too easily arranged from the syndicate's point of view, it is possible for a spiker to get close to sensitive areas of the ship. Stowing away in a prepared cargo canister, even attaching themselves to the outside of the hull, are also means spikers have used at one time or another.

Three-Armed Trade

Popular holo-vid representations aside, the common pirate is not terribly

interested in the deeds of derring-do or the thrill of tweaking the nose of the local colonial governor. He is interested in profit; and that involves getting the stolen goods to a market where he can sell them with little or no questions asked.

The most pressing obstacle the pirate syndicate faces in addressing this problem is one of time. The first response of local authority, once a freighter has reported a hijacking, is to send copies of the cargo canister shipping labels to neighboring systems via fast stutterwarp drone. These labels, which identify the contents, purchasing agent, destination, and insurance carrier of a presealed cargo canister, make it easy to trace stolen goods. They are very difficult to either forge or remove. To avoid the problem of these control ships, the syndicate will often be forced to go outside the local stellar neighborhood to sell its goods. This, however, brings up the problem of the basic instability of pirate syndicates. Unlike legitimate trading concerns, syndicates cannot afford any delay in receiving compensation for their work; more importantly, the longer the stolen cargo is kept on hand, the greater the likelihood of the law catching up.

In response to these problems, most syndicates have used the solution that has come to be known as three-armed trade. A prearranged network is set up with another syndicate or agents of one's own organization, with buyers in another arm of explored space. The carry vessel, with its hold with stolen goods, will rendezvous with another vessel in a relatively untraveled portion of space. They will then transfer the stolen goods for some predetermined form of payment. Most often this comes in the form of computerized money chips, guaranteed at an established banking location, or some other form of goods. The "legitimate" carrier will then return to its portion of space, transferring the stolen goods into "updated" canisters. The carry vessel will then proceed to port and deposit the money chips, or dispense with whatever it gained in the transfer. The pickup vessel will then continue on its regular cargo

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run, or act as a carry vessel for one of its syndicate's catch ships, or go make another pickup in some other system.

In such a fashion a considerable profit can be made. For example, a pirate syndicate in the Chinese Arm will transfer its goods via pickup ships to ports in the French or American Arm. The profits can be used to manufacture and/or purchase drugs, weapons, illegal bio-mods, or whatever the syndicate finds itself dealing in, which can then be smuggled and sold to the proper buyers. Money made here is used to purchase legitimate, high-tech items much in demand on frontier colony worlds. Once the freighters have emptied their holds of their legitimate goods, they then proceed to rendezvous with carry vessels for another hold of hijacked cargo, and the whole process begins anew.

Dock Rocks

The most pressing problem facing pirate syndicates is that of supporting their vessels in space. This problem is especially difficult for the catch vessel. A carry vessel, when it needs servicing, and if it has kept a suitably low profile, can usually enter the dock facilities of any orbital station. It is much harder to explain a fast, highly armed, and often unregistered vessel requiring service. If a pirate syndicate is being sponsored by one of the colonial governments, then arrangements can be made at naval facilities; however, even this creates problems as colonial governors must at least pay lip service to the idea of fighting piracy.

Pirate syndicates alleviate this problem through the use of "dock rocks." Essentially, these are repair and sensor units placed on small asteroids orbiting either in the target system or in a system on a minor travel route. The biggest advantage of using dock rocks is their low profile. Placed on floating bits of debris common to most star systems, they are very difficult to spot by law enforcement authorities. Barely big enough to be placed on navigation charts and without sufficient mass for stutterwarp discharge, these asteroids are large enough to provide adequate sensor cover for a vessel lying doggo.

Dock rocks come in a variety of configurations, depending on the primary use they serve for the syndicate pirate teams. The most common is the emplacement of an automated passive sensor cluster. Left for long periods of time, they basically fill the role of slow-moving sensor drones, collecting information on the patterns of in-system traffic to help the pirate team assess the possibility of target acquisition and of determining the search pattern of local picket ships.

Another common use of dock rocks is to provide long-term fuel cracking stations. This becomes necessary if the catch vessel doesn't have any inherent refueling capabilities. Placed on floating chunks of ice, the stations slowly reduce the hydrogen and water into useable fuel for MHD turbines. Before leaving the system the catch vessel will place the mechanism on another chunk of ice.

Other configurations include hidden caches of spare parts and ordnance, repair equipment and supplies; even survival canisters have been discovered. These allow the crew to stretch out, and they lessen the strain on the vessel's life support system. Though cramped and uncomfortable, they do allow for a small change of scenery. More importantly to the syndicate, they

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allow the catch vessel to lie in wait for a greatly extended period of time, thereby increasing the opportunity for lucrative targets. One rather impressive example was captured by the Manchurian Space Navy last year. Discovered in the Qingyuan system, it was found to have two portable repair frames, living quarters for 20 crewmembers, passive sensor array, a cargo area partially dug into the surface of the asteroid, used for the storage of spare parts, and empty space for the holding of captured cargo. Though not confirmed by Manchurian officials, there was at least one report that the syndicate which controlled the dock rock had begun construction of a point defense laser system!

Hunting Grounds

Pirates do not operate everywhere in known space with equal impunity. Basically, piracy occurs where there is a high ratio of available cargo to the number of naval vessels running piracy suppression operations. The Core worlds, with their teeming populations and abundant supply of both goods and capital, have countless tons of free shipping. They are also the home ports of all manner of fighting starships of the space-faring nations. Such a presence can make any passing thought on following the sweet trade a truly passing one.

Newly explored systems usually have a very low military presence but also a high number of places where pirate captains can tuck themselves into hiding. However, they have no commerce to speak of, and newly settled worlds tend to export high-bulk, low-cost goods such as agricultural products and unprocessed ore. With the obvious exception of tantalum, such cargos are not worth the effort required to grab them.

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Pirate catch and carry teams usually operate in systems which have made a number of capital improvements and which have a high influx on new colonists. This is indicative of a settlement which is hungry for high-tech, low-bulk, high-cost items which pirates love to capture. And while there is some form of space guard or commerce protection, it is of a much lower density when compared to the volume of space needed to be patrolled.

The relative newness of the system can also mean that a number of safe places can be staked out and used on a continuing basis. Having a high mixture of national and cultural groups in a sector of space also works to the advantage of pirate syndicates—it allows for the exploitation of nationalistic tensions that develop. It is a well known fact that during the War of German Reunification a number of Bavarian colonial officials with unification sympathies looked the other way when known pirates came snooping into their systems, as long as it was understood that they restricted their activities to French commerce.

PIRACY IN THE MAIN ARMS

With these influences in mind, what follows is a general overview of piracy in the three major sectors of human explored space.

American Arm

With the limited access of the space lanes, the basically closed nature of the arm itself, and the relatively homogeneous population, piracy on the American Arm of space is a relatively minor problem. Added to this is the almost wolfish attitude the American Space Fleet and the Royal Australian Space Navy take toward space hijackers. Both governments allow their space fleets to operate under what is called a "freedom to fire" policy.

Any naval commander who believes he has discovered evidence that a vessel is participating and/or assisting a piratical action has complete permission to use whatever means are at his disposal to prevent and/or limit the extent of such action, and bring the

perpetrators under control. A number of rather spectacular incidents have already taken place as a result of this policy.

What is a concern is the fact that a growing portion of the smuggling activity that takes place in the American Arm can be traced to the larger pirate syndicates. This is especially true in the area of narcotics, which are manufactured and purchased using money gained from selling cargo stolen from hijacked freighters. With the revelation of the smuggling/pirate connection, both governments have a much stronger resolve to stop all forms of piracy, wherever they may occur. They have even taken the controversial step of sending special flotillas into the other two arms, hunting down those syndicates with known smuggling connections in Australian-American space.

French Arm

With unbridled colonial expansion, coupled with tensions that were fostered in turn by the War of German Reunification, the Central Asian War, and the Joian Rebellion, piracy was a booming business by the end of the century. The advent of the Kafer excursions, along with the increased cooperation and military presence it has brought, has almost completely wiped out the sweet

trade in the French Arm. In addition, the Imperial French Navy has announced that any pirate ship which accepts a Letter of Marque to hunt Kafer vessels will receive a full pardon for all previous activity and protection from future prosecution. Although protested by some national governments, especially the Americans and Australians, these raiders have proven so effective, not only in their attacks on Kafer shipping, but in finding ways to circumvent Kafer interdictions of stranded colonies, that the detractors of this policy have been silenced.

Chinese Arm

The Chinese Arm, with various competing national interests and growing economic expansion, and without the burden of the Kafer War, has become the happy hunting grounds for the modern, space-going freebooter. What is especially disturbing is that apparently not all the hijackings have been purely for economic gain. A number of them, small but growing, have been for the sole purpose of taking the people on-board. The most famous incident occurred when a vessel containing members of the Manchurian Olympic Team was seized while on its way to participate in the Paris Games. The damaged flight recorder indicated that the hijackers rounded up the crew and other passengers into space. The cargo, which was found on the ruined vessel, was intact.

There has been some speculation, all of it so far remaining without evidence, linking this growing trend with the recent upswing in terrorist activity along the arm.

A growing influx of pirate ships from the French Arm has changed the nature of pirate activity in another way. Unable to continue operations due to the Kafer War and unwilling to accept a French pardon, these displaced hijackers have come into conflict with already established syndicates. A series of "pirate wars" has broken out as the established syndicates defend what they consider to be their private hunting grounds, along with their attendant safe places, dock rocks, and buying contacts. Ω

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LEADER OF THE PACK!

Dragon's Flight

A Star Trek Adventure

By
C. W. Hess

On stardate 2/2304.12, the Sellain Colony was established to survey findings of a long-dead civilization apparently wiped out by a war thousands of years ago. The scientific colony found and cataloged ruins all across the planet, making a startling find late in 2/2406: A number of large structures were detected beneath a range of jagged mountains. Rather than reporting this finding immediately, the leader of the scientific colony decided to further investigate the range. The scientists managed to uncover a section of the underground structure and attempted to cut through. Little did they realize that the structure they were cutting into housed the civilization's old, though still active, defense complexes. Frozen for thousands of years by a computer malfunction, the complexes' automated systems were freed by the scientists' actions, unleashing weapons of terror and destruction. With the first cut from a hand phaser, the scientists had opened a Pandora's box. From within a half-collapsed cavern came a tremendous boom. Moments later, a huge winged creature emerged, screeching, from the cavern. What appeared to be a dragon took to the sky, followed by others. Soon, nearly two dozen monsters began clearing the invading humans from the their world. They burned the human settlements with their breaths of plasma flame and ripped down the buildings with talons of steel. When the attack stopped, only a dozen or so colonists were alive to watch the dragons head up into the sky.

The few survivors are still in shock, trying to pull themselves together. In the meantime the dragons, actually automated alien attack ships, have already begun a long journey across interstellar space to visit the homeworld of their ancient enemy. Though the enemy has also been dead for thousands of years, destroyed by the same war, the dragons' programming has not changed. They must carry out their mission to destroy the enemy, even though the target world is no longer occupied by the enemy, but by a Romulan agricultural colony instead. They do not know, nor

do they care, that they will cross into Romulan space and thus begin a chain of events that may very well lead to interstellar war between the United Federation of Planets and the Romulan Star Empire. They only know what they must do.

INTRODUCTION

In this adventure, the player characters are officers aboard a Star Fleet vessel. Encounters take place in space, as well as on planet, while the characters battle an alien menace whose actions threaten to bring war between the United Federation of Planets and the Romulan Empire. The players will be involved in determining the nature and intentions of this threat, and will have to anticipate its moves to stop the menace before it is too late. This adventure does not require any particular type of vessel, nor does it contain any pre-generated player characters, so it can be easily utilized by an existing Star Fleet adventure group and their ship.

To the gamemaster, "Dragons' Flight" is a free-form adventure. Unlike linear scenarios, which are designed to carry the adventure through a specific set of plot lines, "Dragons' Flight" leads the players up to a major crisis point and leaves them there to determine their own fate and to resolve the crisis which has been unleashed upon them.

The referee should read through all background material prior to the start of the game in order to understand what the dragon fleet is, what it does and why, how the Federation and the Romulans will react to it, and so on. These can be found in the Gamemaster's Information section.

The Adventure

SETTING THE STAGE

As the game begins, the players are enroute to the planet Beta Reticuli III, a world located roughly 4.5 parsecs from the Romulan Neutral Zone and site of the scientific research station of the Sellain Colony. The ship is under orders to deliver a cargo of special equipment needed by the archaeological survey

taking place on that planet.

The colony has been studying a number of ancient ruins dating back before the formation of the UFP, possibly even before the human race ventured into space. The players' ship is travelling at warp 6 and is five days away from the colony when the communications officer receives a message from the colony.

The message is badly distorted, and the voice at the other end is obviously terrified and nearly hysterical. In the background are the sounds of thunder and of people screaming. "Help us. Dragons, dozens of them. Horrible. Destroying everything. Hundreds, dead. Bodies, horrible, burned."

A loud, inhuman roar is heard in the background, and the voice screams in terror. Static blasts the channel, then nothing more is heard. Then the signal is lost.

ARRIVAL AT THE SELLAIN COLONY

When the players arrive at the Sellain Colony, they will find it completely decimated. Where buildings once stood, only scorched and cratered ground remain. Pools of melted steel are splattered about. Hundreds of charred remains of the colonists are scattered everywhere. Nothing remains standing, and only a handful of people managed to survive the tragedy. The survivors, 15 in all, are still in a state of shock and are in need of medical attention. They are scattered about the countryside and have been cowering in shadows since the day of the attack. None of them have eaten or have had much sleep, too afraid to go out into the open and spooked by every sound. Some may be carrying hand phasers and will, more than likely, shoot first and ask questions later.

If any of these survivors are rescued, they will describe the events of the attack and those that led up to the attack. Each survivor's story will differ somewhat, with some greatly exaggerating details, and others being in such a state of shock that they remember nothing. The actual events are described in the following section.

EVENTS OF THE LAST DAYS

The following paragraphs describe the events which led to the unleashing of the dragons. Much of this information will not be known to the surviving colonists, but is for the gamemaster's benefit. The players may learn of the events through tricorder logs, physical evidence, questioning the surviving colonists, and so on.

The alien underground complex was accidentally discovered by colony scientists on Stardate 2/2406.21. Tricorder readings indicated massive underground structures made of a dense material opaque to tricorder scans. Up to this point, the researchers had little more than piles of ruins and a few handfuls of artifacts upon which to base their studies.

This new discovery was of tremendous importance to everyone involved. The colony leader, Dr. Alan Moxley, wanted to know more about what they had found before letting the news out. The research had been plagued by too many false alarms, and Moxley wasn't about to let it happen again. Organized into survey teams, the researchers probed the area in hope of finding shallow ground. He found what he was looking for in a huge, partially collapsed cavern. Utilizing existing colony equipment, a work party was able to uncover part of a structure. Finding no openings and impatient over this new finding, he used phasers on the structure. With phaser IIs on full power, he was able to cut open a man-sized hole. Attempting to visually probe the interior, the scientists found a tremendous chamber with proportions so large that none of the walls or the floor could be seen with the lighting on hand.

Tricorder scans indicated that the chamber was roughly two kilometers long and nearly 200 meters tall. While trying to see the floor of the chamber, the scientists heard the sound of something stirring in the darkness. A glint of reflecting light from the scientists' lamps showed movement. As one man peered in through the opening, trying to see what lay below, there was a flicker of light and a small puff of smoke from the

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hole. The man screamed, then lost his grip and fell to his death. None of the other people were close enough to him to actually see the laser beam strike his head. As the group stood in shock, an inhuman roar came from within the chamber.

Terrified by what they might have unleashed, the people fled. They sent word of what had happened to the other colonists via communicator, but they never reached their base. Within minutes, a loud explosion resounded from within the cave, and a huge, winged creature emerged—by all appearances, a tremendous black dragon. As it took to the air, it sounded out a horrible roar. It chased down the fleeing colonists and let out a fiery breath of white hot plasma. The dragon left the charred bodies and continued to fly around, looking for other invaders. Soon more dragons emerged from the cavern until there were 20 in all. They proceeded to destroy the colony, killing nearly everyone, and leaving not a single building or vehicle intact. The survivors could only watch as the dragons destroyed the colony and then fled into the sky.

SECOND DISTRESS

While the players are locating the last of the survivors they will receive a distress call from the *Remora*-class escort U.S.S. *Tigershark*. The vessel was responding to the distress at the Sellain Colony when it ran directly into the dragon fleet. The vessel immediately comes under attack and is swarmed. The communications officer of the *Tigershark* manages to broadcast a message: "Mayday, mayday. This is U.S.S. *Tigershark* calling. We are under attack by a swarm of alien—objects. Shields are gone, maneuvering is gone, many casualties. The captain is dead. We need help, please." The message ends

with the sound of ripping metal and rushing air. The last sound heard is that of voices screaming in a mixture of terror and pain. The sound fades and then the signal is lost. A successful communications systems operation roll will give the players the coordinates of the vessel. At this point the players are at a major crossroads. They may stay at the Sellain Colony to further investigate the disaster there; they may head for the *Tigershark* to look for survivors; they may try to chase after the alien menace; or they may even leave a detachment of personnel to investigate the planet while the players' vessel goes off to do something else. The gamemaster must now guide the players through the adventure as they search for a way to stop the dragonships.

Gamemaster's Information

TIGERSHARK

The U.S.S. *Tigershark* is the first vessel to encounter the dragonfleet. The ship was a *Remora* MkII-class vessel that was responding to the distress call from the Sellain Colony. Unfortunately, the vessel's course brought it head on into the dragonfleet. The ship was surrounded by the oncoming fleet before the crew knew what was going on. The dragonships attacked immediately and quickly crippled the vessel. That is when the *Tigershark* transmitted its distress call. The dragonships then closed in, hitting the vessel with their energy beams and blasting it with their plasma bolts. One of the dragons ripped the ship open with its powerful talons. The bridge was completely torn open during this attack, along with many other areas of the ship.

As a last action, the *Tigershark's* first officer had the ship's recorder log ejected clear of the dying vessel. This object is similar in appearance to, though much smaller than, a photon torpedo. As it is equipped with its own locator beacon, it can easily be detected among the debris floating near the hulk of the *Tigershark*. The recorder log

shows in detail all of the action that occurred on the bridge during the encounter.

THE DRAGONFLEET

The dragonfleet is a force of 20 semi-intelligent robotic starships which resemble dragons of earth mythology. They were constructed by the natives of Beta Reticuli III to provide defense against planetary invaders and to carry out strike missions against enemies of the race. The fleet has been housed within the protective confines of the underground hangar complex for many centuries. Only recently has it been released to once again carry out a mission to defend, or in this case, avenge, the race. The dragonfleet is presently enroute to a world located across the Neutral Zone in Romulan space. The journey will last approximately 87 days as the fleet makes a direct dash at warp 6. Each dragonship within the fleet has the location of this world recorded in memory and is programmed to let nothing slow the progress of the fleet. The dragonships are identical in appearance and function except for four command ships. These have navigation and communications gear which is slightly more advanced than the others. Though they appear identical to the other vessels, a successful communications systems operation skill roll will uncover a high-frequency burst signal occasionally being broadcast from these ships. This roll should be made once per hour, and the fleet must be within sensor range of the ship. When a vessel of the fleet detects a possibly hostile object, it will relay sensor information to its command ship. Four dragonships are under each command ship, and one of the command ships additionally directs the other command ships. Information is relayed to the primary command ship, which decides how to react to the threat. If the primary command ship is destroyed, then another command ship will take over for it. Normally, two dragonships will be sent in to destroy any object which outputs more than five points of power. If the detected object outputs more than 20 points, a second pair of ships will re-

spond. As many objects as possible will be engaged by the fleet as long as at least six dragonships, including the four command ships, are still in reserve. This main body will continue on course, while dragonships engaged in combat will continue fighting until the fleet is outside of sensor range. Engaged dragonships will then break off combat, if possible, and return to the fleet. If threatening vessels pursue, the dragonships will strike out again and then break off. They will maintain this cycle until the threat drops behind or until the dragonfleet is clearly in sensor range. In the latter case, the threat will then be fully reengaged again. Dragonships will also disengage from targets which are considered destroyed or neutralized. A target is destroyed if it produces no power output. The dragonships can be fooled by tactics such as shutting down the ship's engines. However, they do possess a limited memory and can recognize vessels they fought with in the past. Dragonships are semi-intelligent, and because of this, they sometimes are able to temporarily bypass their standard programming to do something unexpected. The gamemaster may simply throw in a tactical change or may roll percentile dice whenever a programming decision is made, such as breaking off from combat. There is a 10-percent possibility of a temporary tactical alteration at each major decision point.

The Dragonships

A dragonship is not really a ship as much as it is a semi-intelligent machine, or robot, which resembles the winged dragons of ancient earth mythology. These machines have dimensions very similar to medium-sized starships; they possess the capability of warp travel, and carry weapons and shielding just as a combat starship does. The primary difference between a dragonship and an average starship is that the dragonship does not have a crew, so it is unable to effect repairs quickly. However, it can still make some repairs to itself using a maintenance robot which roams its interior. Also, a dragonship is controlled by an semi-intelligent computer and is capable of performing some sophisti-

cated thoughts. It can carry out its mission and can handle most situations. However, its actions are controlled by its preprogramming. In cases of major operations, a central computer unit with more complex programming will transmit orders to the dragonships through the use of an extremely powerful set of transmitters. The range of the dragonships' sensors is slightly less than the average sensor range of most Star Fleet vessels. When an unknown object comes to within sensor range of a dragon-

ship, it will pass sensor data onto its command ship, which will, in turn, relay the information to the primary command ship. The primary command ship will then decide how to respond to the possible threat. The level of the response relies primarily on the size of the detected object and its energy output levels. An object that is less than 1,000 tons will be completely ignored unless it comes within close sensor range (about four hexes in the Starship Combat Simulator) of any dragonship. Larger objects will be noticed out to maximum detection range (about 20 hexes in the Starship Combat Simulator) if they produce more than 5 points of power. If a dragonship is in pursuit of a vessel, it will continue to track and pursue until the object pulls well out of sensor range (25 hexes). If a dragonship is in the midst of combat, it will not stop until all power output from a ship is reduced to zero. The standard combat tactic for an attacking dragonship is to close with the enemy for as long as possible, then open fire as soon as the enemy ship is within eight hexes or as soon as the dragonship is fired upon. When attacking, the dragonship will close as much as possible, doing damage with the plasma jet and maneuvering onto its target. If at the end of a movement phase the dragonship is in the same hex as its target, it will make a physical attack with its talons. To determine if the dragonship successfully hits with these, the gamemaster must roll one die for each talon. If the roll is equal to 8 or less, then the target receives 1 point of superstructure damage. Shields may prevent this damage. To determine if they do, divide the strength of the shield the dragonship came through by two, and roll one die. If this roll is less than or equal to the die roll, then all physical attacks are blocked for this phase.

The Plasma Jet Damage Chart to the right should be used when resolving fire from the dragonship's plasma jet. These weapons work on the same principles as the Romulan plasma bolt weapon, and the rules for conducting fire are the same.

Dragonships have a special capability which makes them even more powerful in a group than individually.

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Dragonships may maneuver in a tight formation with two ships sharing a single hex. When in this formation, these vessels can overlap their shields and thus gain protection from both. In order to use this tactic, two vessels must have the same facing and must travel together for a full turn. A ship which is shielded by another ship receives one-third protection from that ship's shields. All fractions are rounded down. Any hits taken by the ship go proportionally to its own shield as well as to that of the shielding ship. All ships must maintain the same movement point allowance and the same course in order to stay in this state. For example, two dragonships are stacked together and are overlapping their forward shields. Vessel A allocated 12 points, while vessel B allocated 6. Total forward shield strength for A is 14 points: $12 + (1/3 \times 6)$. Total forward shield strength for B is 10: $6 + (1/3 \times 12)$. If ship A takes a 7-point hit, ship B's shields would take 1 point of damage, while its own shield would take the remaining 7—ship B is providing only one-seventh of the shielding for ship A.

THE DRAGONSHIPS

Hull Data

Superstructure Points: 16

Damage Chart: B

Size

Length: 123 m

Width: 120 m

Height: 38 m

Weight: 21,000 mt

Landing Capability: Yes

Other Data

Crew: None

Engines And Power Data

Total Power Units Available: 24

Movement Point Ratio: 2/1

Warp Engines Number: 2

Power Units Available: 11

Stress Charts: K/M

Maximum Safe Cruising Speed:

Warp 6

Emergency Speed: Warp 7

Impulse Engine Power Units

Available: 2

Weapons And Firing Data

Beam Weapon Type: Plasma Jet

Number: 1

Firing Arcs: Fwd

Firing Char: O

Power to Arm: 8

Beam Weapon Type: Energy

Beam

Number: 2

Firing Arcs: 1f/p, 1f/s

Firing Chart: W

Maximum Power: 8

Damage Modifiers: 1-8: +3, 9-13:

+2, 14-20: +1

Shields Data

Deflector Shield Type: N/A

Shield Point Ratio: 1/1

Maximum Shield Power: 12

PLASMA JET DAMAGE CHART

Range	Damage
1	24/12
2	24/12
3	22/11
4	20/10
5	20/10
6	18/9
7	16/8
8	16/8
9	16/8
10	14/7
11	12/6
12	10/5
13	8/4
14	8/4

SELLAIN COLONY

The following information is available to the players through use of the ship's library computer or through sensor scans of the planet.

World Log:

Beta Reticuli III (The Sellain Colony) System Data

System Name: Beta Reticuli

Number of Class M Present: 1

Planetary Data

Position in System: Third

Number of Satellites: Ring and two moons

Planetary Gravity: 1.0 G

Planetary Size

Diameter: 14,600 km

Equatorial Circumference: 45,900 km

Total Surface Area:

669,700,000 km

Percent Land Mass: 89%

Total Land Area: 596,033,000 km

Planetary Conditions

Length of Day: 31 hrs

Atmospheric Density: Thin

General Climate: Desert

Mineral Content

Normal Metals: 33%

Radioactives: 27%

Gemstones: 1%

Industrial Crystals: Trace

Special Minerals: Trace

Beta Reticuli III is a desert world located in the Beta Reticuli star system, roughly four-point-five parsecs from the Romulan Neutral Zone. The year is only 190 local days long, with a day lasting approximately 31 hours. The seasons on Sellain Colony occur suddenly, changing from a hot, calm day to a violently stormy one almost without warning. The planet's sandy surface is broken up by rocky outcroppings, steep mountains, and jagged ridges. The soil on Sellain Colony is sterile and is incapable of supporting life.

Inside the Dragonship

The accessible areas within the dragonship are almost entirely maintenance access passageways. These long narrow corridors measure a little over a meter wide. The walls of the corridors are all lined with what appear to be large access panels, conduits, and piping. The largest open area within the dragonship is the control room, which provides access to the ship's controlling computer and can also be used to pilot the ship. Entry is through two doors located on the port and the starboard walls. The control room is normally dark except for a circle of light surrounding a large control panel in the center of the room. As soon as someone steps into this light, a number of view screens on both the forward and aft walls will activate. These screens show the view in front of and behind the dragonship. Smaller screens show actual parts of the ship's exterior. A final view screen shows a sensor display of all objects within maximum sensor range. The dragonship's computer not only controls the ship, but also contains a great deal of information that the players might be able to use to stop the dragonfleet. In getting information from the ship's computer, a character will have to use the same methods as described in the main complex brain unit description of The Alien Complexes section. The information contained within the computer will include mission data, target coordinates, recall instructions, and movement instructions. A tricorder can be used to store the information, or it can be sent to the players' ship's main computer through use of a tricorder. Successful analysis of this information will require a successful Computer Operations skill roll, which may be attempted once per hour. The results of the analysis will be the isolation of the dragonship's recall code. The players may then be able to transmit this code to the other dragonships to signal them to return to their base. However, this must be done in such a way as to match the approximate signal strength and wavelength as the ground-based transmitter on Beta Reticuli III. For a starship to do this, it would have to be fairly close-

by and may have to try several times before the conditions are exactly right and the code is accepted by the primary command dragonship.

The Alien Complexes

These underground complexes were built by the natives of Beta Reticuli IV thousands of years ago as a strategic forces control center—sort of the alien equivalent of NORAD. These were built to protect the planet from invaders and also as a central command center for mounting strikes against enemy worlds. The entire complex consisted of a hangar complex for housing the planet's robotic combat vessels, a pair of planetary defense weapon stations, a central computer control complex, and the alien command center. The great war which brought an end to the aliens' civilization destroyed the command center and one planetary defense station, and left the other damaged. With the loss of the command center, the central computer automatically took control of what was left of the alien complex. However, a freak malfunction in the computer programming caused it to lockup, unable to perform its mission of sending a strike force to the enemy homeworld. When the Federation scientific team broke into the hangar complex, the event broke the computer out of its critical loop and freed it up to perform its mission. The following section details the underground complexes found on the Sellain Colony. For more details on the planet itself, the gamemaster should consult the Sellain Colony section.

Hangar Complex

The hangar complex is the most likely location of entry into the alien complex. The complex is hidden beneath a jagged mountainside. Entry into the complex is through a huge, natural-looking cavern. This dark entrance measures

about 300 meters wide and 200 meters high. The cavern itself is about 2500 meters deep, narrowing to 200 meters wide and 50 meters high about two-thirds of the way in. Located about 500 meters into the cavern is a large door in the floor, measuring 200 meters square. This passage will be closed, but will open when approached by a craft of any size. When closed, the door is indistinguishable from the floor. In the center of the door is a man-sized hole. A second door is located 1000 meters further into the cavern. Beneath these is a huge underground hangar.

The Hangar: The hangar is a huge underground building measuring 2600 meters long by 800 meters wide with a ceiling clearance of 190 meters. Numerous lights shine down from the ceiling, producing circles of light on the floor 25 meters in diameter. This lighting, however, is not bright enough to illuminate the tremendously high ceiling of the hangar. Located in the ceiling of the east end of the hangar and also near the center of the hangar are large doors covering 200-meter-square openings. These are dimly outlined by a thin string of lights. Directly below this is a pile of rocks identical to those found in the cavern above. Somewhere beneath this pile is the body of the first colonist who was killed during the excavation. At the west end of the hangar is a set of three platforms, illuminated among the dark surroundings. Upon two of these are dragonships in various stages of repair. Inside one of the dragonships is a maintenance robot handling some electronics repair. Next to the center of the south wall are parked three dragonships. These vehicles have just been repaired and are being readied to launch to protect the system from invading vessels. Maintenance robots are loading the ships with fuel and other supplies. This will take them two hours to complete after the players arrive. The robots are getting the supplies from a building in the southwest corner of the hangar. This large building seems to be the source of a faint humming noise.

Gamemaster's Notes: The hangar area is meant to be the first spooky location within the alien complex. It is

dark and gargantuan with areas that are clearly lit from a distant source. The remaining dragonships will be launching within two hours, but the players will not necessarily figure this out. For players in need of help, the gamemaster may hype up the readying sequence to further indicate that the ships will be launching—perhaps warning alarms, lights, and ships powering up. The dragonships can be damaged by accurately placed phaser fire, but if the players do not knock them out quickly enough, a pair of security robots will be sent in to defend them. Also, the dragonships may be brought to life.

The Hangar Building: The hangar building is the primary place to explore within the area of the hangar complex. It is a large, single-story building measuring 300 meters long, 100 meters wide, and 10 meters high. Two main entrances into the building are located in the center of the east wall and the north wall, with doors of the type normally familiar to the players. They are very heavy and operate by sliding open when someone is detected close to the door. In addition, three large cargo storage room doors are located on the north wall. All of the outer doors will work automatically, with the exception of the cargo doors. These are set to open only for the maintenance robots. Most of the interior of the hangar building is dimly lit. The walls are of a smooth, plastic-like material which has the strength of reinforced concrete. All interior doors are of the hidden/open type that is described in the common locations and objects section.

Main Hallway: This large corridor is lined with structural supports forming triangular archways every 20 meters. The corridor has no apparent purpose, as there are no doors into or out of it, except for the main ones which lead out of the building.

Flight Control Room: This room is very dark. A single spotlight will illuminate a pedestal in the center of the room. This light will operate as long as someone is inside the room. If someone stands in the light, the walls of the room will come alive with images of the hangar deck, focusing on the dragonships

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located at the south wall of the hangar. A set of four symbols will flash on one of the screens in regular intervals—this is a countdown timer. The symbols are numbers, with the left digit counting first. After one complete cycle, the next digit will change, and so on. The alien math is based upon the number 6, so there are a total of 6 different symbols, instead of our 10.

Security Robot/Maintenance Robot Room: These two rooms are limited to authorized personnel only, so the players will not be able to enter in the usual manner, as the doors will not open for them. They are nearly identical in appearance, and are both simply storage rooms with three two-meter-square platforms located next to one wall.

Inside the security robot room is a globe-shaped security device located on the ceiling. This device will attack any unauthorized personnel. It is equipped with a single standard laser and will take 100 points of damage before it no longer functions.

Alien Cubicles Room: This room contains a row of cubicles set into the east wall. On the opposite wall is a set of geometric shapes painted in varying shades, mostly dark. As for the cubicles themselves, they each measure approximately three meters square. There is a panel on the north wall of each and a picture on the south wall. If anyone enters the room, a door will close off the west end. This door will only open for the occupant when he attempts to leave.

Gamemaster's Notes: These are privacy cubicles used by the aliens for just about everything from eating to sleeping. The panel controls lighting, temperature, music, food output, and so on. A waste disposal door is located in the floor but is not visible, like most standard doors. This door is controlled by the panel on the wall.

Security Monitoring Room: The entrance to this room is locked, and passage is given only to authorized personnel. If the players manage to get in, by wits or by force, they will find a large, dark room. Surrounding the center of the room are three panels, each illuminated in its own circle of light. If a person stands in any one of these circles, the wall screens will activate, displaying changing images of the hangar complex and the building.

At least one picture will always show each group of characters wherever they may be, including in this room. If any action takes place, it will be displayed here. Also, an overall map of both the hangar complex and the building will be displayed, indicating the positions of the security robots as well as any intruders (the characters).

Maintenance Monitoring Room: This room is open to entry. It operates exactly like the security monitoring room, except that the images shown on the screen will be from the point of view of the maintenance robots. A view will show the loading of the three dragonships, as well as the electronics repair of another dragonship. A large map of the hangar complex indicates the positions of the dragonships and the maintenance robots.

Combat Monitoring Room: This room is open to entry. It operates exactly like the security and maintenance monitoring rooms. However, this room is slightly smaller and contains only two panels. The view screens will project any images transmitted by the fleet. Because of the great distances, there is a time lag of several days, so the images will be several days old. These images will be constantly changing, showing views of the fleet, short- and long-range sensor scans, and ship status displays. Also displayed here is a star map. A successful Astronomy or Astrogation roll will identify this as a map of the local sector. A blinking light points out a star system in Romulan space, and a red triangle shows the position of the dragonfleet. It is heading directly for the blinking target.

Just as the players are about to leave this room, another set of ships will be

added to the list of active vessels and will be displayed on the screen. The views will concentrate on the three dragonships parked in the hangar. Status displays will be shown as the three ships appear to be coming to life.

The room is only to monitor the activities of the fleet. If the players destroy anything in this room, it will have no effect on the status of the fleet itself.

Brain Room: This room is the access center to the semi-intelligent computer which controls the hangar complex. This unit does not control the dragonfleet, nor does it control the planetary defenses. It will, however, control the launch of the dragonships now in the hangar and all systems within the hangar complex. The room is smaller than most rooms in the building and is unusually well lit. A single panel is located in the center of the room. On the east, south, and west walls are large, translucent columns which display shifting patterns of colors in correlation to activity by the brain unit.

The walls encasing the brain unit are shielded by a powerful force field. This field will absorb any normal phaser fire, but a fully charged phaser II set to overload will knock down this shielding. The control computer is then vulnerable to normal phaser fire. However, the instant the shield is dropped, security robots will be sent to protect the brain unit.

This unit can be deciphered and controlled in the same manner as the brain unit in the main complex. However, this unit only controls the hangar and the hangar building, as well as the launching of the three remaining dragonships.

Storage Room: The storage rooms are large rooms accessible only to authorized personnel and maintenance robots. The rooms are stacked with crates and containers holding various repair parts. None of these are usable by the players.

Transport Room: This relatively small room is dimly lit and contains four large, triangular platforms on the west side. One of these platforms has a pulsating glow to it. This platform is the only one contained in a circle of light. Also, a faint humming sound can be heard coming from it.

If all the people in the room step onto the lit platform, then they will be transported immediately to the transport room in the main complex. If other people in the room are not on the platform, then the unit will delay for 20 seconds. Any persons on the platform will become surrounded by a forcefield which is unaffected by phaser fire. After about 15 seconds, transport will take place.

Life-Support Room: This narrow room is brightly lit (comparatively speaking) and contains a single panel in front of the long west wall. On the wall itself are four large indicators. These devices are vertical bars reaching from the floor to the ceiling. A red bar reaches from the floor halfway up each indicator.

This is the life-support system control room for the entire hangar complex. The first of the indicators shows temperature; the second, pressure; the third, humidity; and the fourth, ionization levels. While the control panel can alter these levels, a built-in safety feature prevents these from changing dangerously.

Power Room: This large room located at the far west end of the hangar building serves to fulfill all the power requirements of the entire hangar complex. Taking up most of the floor space in the west side of the room is a huge shaft leading down into the darkness. This is the core of the main power generator.

The shaft is 120 meters deep and is lined with energy field conductors, control equipment, monitoring sensors, and so on. The shaft is dark, but the walls contain numerous lights running their lengths.

Behind the north and south walls are the hangar building's energy converters and power storage units. Each of the walls themselves have three large panels reaching from floor to ceiling. These panels glow with a color indicating their power storage status: Green for low, blue for medium, and red for high. All these will normally be red unless altered by a high power draw from the brain unit, heavy use of the transport device, charging and repair of the robots or dragonships, and so on.

Main Complex

The main alien complex is the control center for the dragonfleet and all the planetary defenses. The complex is located 200 meters beneath a desert plain. Four ventilator shafts lead up from the complex to the surface; however, all of these have been long covered over by the desert.

LEVEL ONE

Transmitter Devices: These large devices line the walls of the first level. On the front wall of each is a pair of columns covered with large, window-like panels. These flicker and glow moments before the devices begin transmission.

When this occurs all nearby electronic impulses on the planet's surface will be scrambled. Inside the complex, the transmissions will simply make communications impossible and will cause tri-

corders to give false readings. At the base of one of the transmitters is a locked access panel. Behind this panel is part of the transmitter circuitry. A successful Communications Systems Technology roll will reveal that this is an external tie-in to the transmitters. The players will be able to tap into this circuit if a successful Communications Systems Technology roll and an Electronics Technology roll are both made at one-fourth skill level. This may be attempted once per hour. The circuit may then be used to broadcast signals to the dragonfleet.

Central Core: The central core is a cross-shaped room which contains the complex's main life-support ducting, power conduits, and control equipment. In between each of the arms of the cross is a large, round column that seems to be sunk into the walls. These are the shafts for the complex's powered lifts.

Liftshafts: Each liftshaft contains six lifts lining the walls, each in its own cylindrical tube. Entrance is through a

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standard door. Inside the lift car is a triangular panel which controls the destination of the car. Pressing a part of the panel will activate the lift. Reaching the destination will take approximately 10 seconds per level travelled.

Ventilation Shaft: This wide, deep shaft is located in the middle of the central core. It is approximately 10 meters square and runs from level one all the way down to level two, 165 meters below. The opening has a lighted band surrounding it.

A horizontal band of light rings the shaft at 20-meter increments. The walls of the shaft are lined with ventilation ducts, conduits, access panels, service

Zap 'em.

Blast 'em.

Fry 'em.

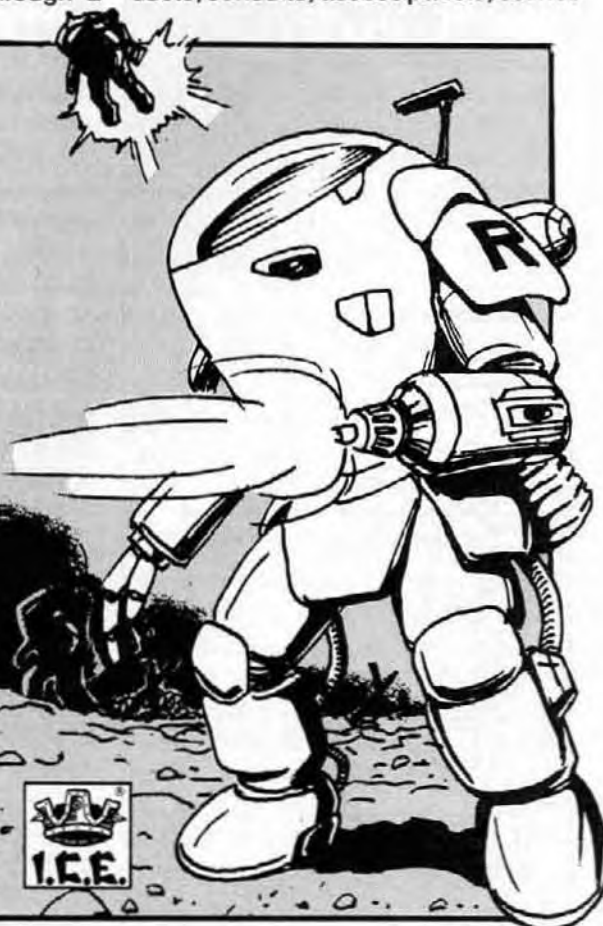
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platforms, and so on. None of these will be of any major use to the players. The shaft ends at the ceiling of level two, 15 meters off the floor.

MAINTENANCE ROBOTS

Dimensions

Height: 1.8 m

Width: 1.1 m

Mass: 200 kg

Mobility

Type: Antigrav

Action Points: 8

Combat

Strength: 80

Dexterity: 50

Armor: 20 points/attack

Hit Points: 200/100 points

Tentacle

Number: 4

Location: 1 front, 1 rear, 1 each side

Damage: 2D10 points

Skill: 50%

SECURITY ROBOTS

Dimensions

Height: 1.5 m

Width: 1.9 m

Mass: 500 kg

Mobility

Type: Antigrav

Action Points: 12

Combat

Strength: 80

Dexterity: 50

Armor: 100 points

Hit Points: 250/150 points

Stunner

Number: 1

Location: Right side

Damage: 75 points (Nonpermanent)

Skill: 75%

Laser

Number: 1

Location: Left side

Damage: 80 points

Skill: 75%

Tentacle

Number: 1

Location: Front

Damage: 2D10 points

Skill: 50%

LEVEL TWO

The Brain Unit: The main complex's brain unit occupies an area ringing the central core between levels one and two. This unit controls all the operations of the complex, as well as the planetary defense systems and the dragonfleet.

If the casing which houses the brain unit can be penetrated, someone might figure out how this computer works. It is alien in design; however, many of the components are similar to those found in modern Federation computer designs. If someone studies this device, utilizing at least a sciences tricorder, the research may yield some results. For each day of study, a character must make a Computer Technology roll and an Electronics Technology roll, both at one-fourth skill level. A successful set of rolls will indicate that the character has managed to decipher the alien computer system and may be able to make it operate as needed.

Making the computer operate properly will require a successful Computer Operation skill roll at one-fourth skill level. This can be attempted only after the computer system has been deciphered and can be retried once per hour.

LEVEL THREE

Power Room: This room contains access to the complex's main power plant. In the center of the triangular-shaped room is a huge shaft leading down about 225 meters, very similar to the one in the power room of the hangar building. Located on either side of the shaft are panels used to monitor and control power output.

Power Storage/Converters: Located in the north and south ends of this level are the energy converters and power storage units for the main complex. On each of the walls facing the central shaft are three large panels reaching from floor to ceiling. These operate in the same manner as those within the power room of the hangar building. These units provide power for the complex, the brain unit, and the transmitters.

Storage: These rooms are only accessible to authorized personnel. Located here are numerous crates and

other containers which carry various spare repair parts and supplies. These are used by maintenance robots for upkeep and repair of the complex.

Maintenance/Security Robot Rooms: These rooms are identical to their counterparts in the hangar building except for the number of robots located in each.

Transport and Life Support Rooms: These rooms are identical to those found in the hangar building.

Alien Chamber: Located at the east end of level three is a large chamber room containing a number of triangular boxes. These are one meter high and have transparent tops. Inside each is the body of an alien being. A row of indicators at the side of each show the vital signs of the occupant. The aliens are all dead, their now-reactivated life support units having failed some centuries ago.

Locations and Objects

Walls: The walls of the complex are made from an extremely strong material that feels like plastic, yet is very resistant to all forms of damage. The wall will absorb all damage from weapons which do less than 50 points in a single hit. Any damage beyond this will have a cumulative effect on the wall. After the wall has received 200 points of damage it will be holed; 200 additional points will create a hole large enough for an average-sized person to go through. For these purposes, a phaser set on disintegrate is assumed to do 100 points of damage.

Doors: Most of the doors within the alien complex are actually sections of the wall which are equipped with a device similar in operation to the transporter. These units will automatically dematerialize the section of the wall when a person steps within one meter of the door. Some doors are locked and will only open to persons carrying an authorization device. Security and maintenance robots are both equipped with such devices.

Control Panels: All the control pan-

els within the complex have a smooth, solid surface. A panel is divided up into many control surfaces which are like buttons, except that they are part of the panel face and activate by sensing the heat from the operator's touch. The internal electronics of these are similar to modern Federation technology.

Deciphering one of these panels will essentially require a successful roll on a skill related to the function of the panel, giving the character studying the panel enough knowledge to figure out what the panel is for. This roll may be attempted once per hour, then a roll may be made to decipher the exact controls on the panel.

This requires a successful roll on a related skill, but at one-fourth skill level, and it may again be attempted once per hour. Operating the panel requires a successful roll on the same skill, at one-half skill level. This may be attempted once per turn (10 seconds).

Maintenance Robots: Maintenance robots are 1.8-meter-tall units which are used to provide maintenance and repair within the alien complex and also on-board each of the dragonships. These units are powered by stored energy and will operate for 72 hours before needing recharging. If the robot is inactive, this can be stretched into several weeks.

It will take two disintegrate hits to destroy a robot. The first hit will immobilize it, while the second hit will destroy it completely. These robots will not attack unless provoked. Even then, they will only do so to defend themselves.

Security Robots: Security robots are 1.5-meter-tall, mushroom-shaped units which are used to capture or terminate any intruder within the alien complex. These units are powered by stored energy which must be replenished once every 48 hours.

The security robot's armor will absorb 100 hit points per turn from any weapon attacks. A disintegrate hit on the armor will completely destroy the armor only. Any further attacks will begin to damage the interior. When damage gets through the armor, the first 250 points done to the robot's interior will immobilize it. If it takes an additional 150 points, it will be completely out of commission.

The laser weapon used by the security robot has the same range characteristics as the hand laser. The stunner on the security robot has the same range characteristics as the phaser I-A set to stun.

Encounters in the Complex

While the players journey within the alien complex, there is a chance of encounters occurring with the robotic inhabitants. The gamemaster should check for an encounter once every 10 minutes that the characters move about inside the complex.

If the characters stay put in a single location, the gamemaster should only roll once every 20 minutes.

The primary encounter regions within the alien complex are the main complex, the hangar, and the hangar building. The gamemaster should choose the appropriate table for each encounter and roll one die.

The Alien Race

The people who once inhabited the planet Beta Reticuli III, presently referred to as the Sellain Colony, called themselves the Ralkyde. This ancient race was something of a cross between humans and reptiles. The average Ralkyde was shorter and slimmer than a human, with longer, thinner arms and more powerful legs. Mentally, the Ralkydes were very much like humans, with slightly higher psionic capacity. They also tended to have a bit more strength and endurance than humans and had a higher dexterity.

However, they were also much shorter-lived than humans, with an average life span of 40 years, and possessed much less luck and charisma. One of their most notable physical features was the possession of only two fingers and an opposing thumb on each hand, which led to the race's development of math based on the number six. Alien numerals are read

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ENCOUNTER TABLES The Main Complex

Die Roll	Result
1	None
2	None
3	None
4	None
5	None
6	None
7	None
8	Maintenance robot
9	Security robot
0	Security robot

The Hangar and Hangar Building

Die Roll	Result
1	None
2	None
3	None
4	None
5	None
6	None
7	None
8	None
9	Maintenance robot
0	Security robot

with the lower digits to the left and the higher digits to the right. So that their "16" is equivalent to the standard human number 61 (except that the 61 is a base-six number). The alien numbers are represented as the standard symbols shown on the Alien Numeric Table. Following these are some examples of the alien numerics translated into base six and decimal-based equivalents.

The Ralkydes were very group oriented, with each individual working toward the betterment of himself through the betterment of others. They were also very isolationistic, not liking to be disturbed by other races and not liking the fact that other races occupied the galaxy.

When the Ralkyde met their greatest adversaries, the T'Lachnam, a race of warrior humanoids, they were not sure what to do. They did not want to make contact, but the T'Lachnam gave them no choice. The Ralkyde wanted to push away other races, while the T'Lachnam wanted to conquer. The two races fought for control over the local area of space and finally ended up destroying

each other. The only examples left of the Ralkyde are the bodies which are kept inside hibernation capsules in the chamber located at the bottom level of the aliens' main complex.

Timeline

2/2408.09: The dragonfleet leaves Sellain Colony and heads for Romulan Space.

2/2409.18: The Lexena Transport S.S. *Lufkin* encounters the dragonfleet and comes under heavy attack. The ship broadcasts a distress signal, but is destroyed before it is completed.

2/2410.06: The dragonfleet enters the Neutral Zone. The *Shassarik* continues to tail it by order of Star Fleet. A Romulan patrol immediately attacks, but is nearly wiped out by the overwhelming forces of the dragonfleet.

2/2410.11: A Romulan fleet is grouping, with the mission of making a counter-attack should the Federation not stop the dragonfleet.

2/2411.02: The dragon fleet destroys the Romulan outpost and begins its journey back to Sellain Colony.

Federation can do to convince the Romulans otherwise. Even if the Romulans are convinced that the dragonfleet is alien, however, that won't be enough for them. They will still hold the Federation responsible for using the dragonfleet as a tool of opportunity against the Romulan Star Empire, or will claim Star Fleet to be incompetent for not being able to handle the situation. If the Romulans believe that the Federation can stop the dragonfleet, then they will threaten to attack Federation outposts unless the dragonfleet is stopped. If it is not stopped, then they will carry out their threats.

In the end, however, neither side is really prepared for war and will attempt to prevent the situation from escalating greatly. The Romulans will settle for getting even, or at least showing that they are not weak. The Federation's goal is to stop the dragonfleet. If that fails, then it will simply try to keep the Romulans from doing too much damage.

Combat Forces

Those gamemasters with the necessary materials and interest may wish to enact some of the battles that may occur between the Federation, Romulan, and alien fleets. For this purpose, a basic order of battle has been provided.

The Federation forces will not be all grouped together, but will generally be split up into task groups spread out across the border area.

The Romulans, on the other hand, will probably be grouped into one or two attack fleets if they move into Federation space.

A Last Word

The gamemaster is encouraged to read through this scenario carefully and add onto it and fill in some of the details as he sees fit. This could include things like generating NPC stats for the surviving colonists, adding hostile animal life to Beta Reticuli III, and so on.

If the gamemaster wishes to put in the

INITIAL FORCES IN THE LOCAL AREA AS OF 2/2409.06

Dragonfleet: 20 dragonships.

Federation: 1 *Enterprise*-class MkI cruiser, 1 *Remora*-class MkII escort, 1 *Andor*-class MkII cruiser, 2 *Baker*-class MkII destroyers, 1 *Wilkerson*-class MkI destroyer, 2 *Nelson*-class MkV scouts, 1 *Keith*-class MkI scout, 2 *Derf*-class MkIII tenders.

ADDITIONAL FORCES AS OF 2/2410.06

Dragonfleet: No change.

Federation: 1 *Northampton*-class MkIII frigate, 2 *Ranger*-class MkIII scouts, 1 *Reliant*-class MkIII cruiser, 3 *Solar*-class MkVI cutters, 2 *Wilkerson*-class MkI destroyers.

Romulan: 3 V-8 *Bird of Prey*-class cruisers, 2 CS-2 *Graceful Flyer*-class scouts, 1 V-6 *Gallant Wing*-class cruiser.

ADDITIONAL FORCES AS OF 2/2411.15

Dragonfleet: No change.

Federation: 2 *Chandley*-class MkI frigates, 1 *Remora*-class MkIII escort, 1 *Genser*-class MkI escort, 2 *Thufir*-class MkIII destroyers, 1 *Lenthal*-class MkII destroyer, 1 *Wilkerson*-class MkI destroyer, 1 *Enterprise*-class MkII cruiser, 1 *Durrett*-class MkI cruiser.

Romulan: 4 T-10 *Bright One*-class destroyers, 1 V-6 *Gallant Wing*-class cruiser, 2 V-30 *Winged Defender*-class cruisers, 3 V-7 *Whitewind*-class cruisers.

Reactions

As the game begins, the Romulans will know nothing of the ordeal as it is occurring in the UFP. Once the dragonfleet is spotted by a Federation starship and is determined to be heading for the Romulan Neutral Zone, Star Fleet Command may be under the impression that the ships are part of a Romulan raid returning to base on the other side of the Neutral Zone. Much speculation will be flying about the intent of the raid: Why did they attack? How long have they been operating in Federation space? Are they all headed back, or are there still more in Federation territory? It will be up to the players to determine the true origins of the dragonfleet.

In the meantime, the Romulans will consider the dragonfleet to be a creation of Star Fleet. There is little that the

ALIEN NUMERIC TABLE

Alien Numeric	Symbol	
	⊗	= 1
	⋈	= 2
	⋈	= 3
	⋈	= 4
	⋈	= 5
	⋈	= 6
Alien Numeric	Base Six	Decimal Based
⋈⋈	= 23	15
⋈⋈	= 61	37
⋈⋈	= 43	27
⋈⋈	= 24	16

extra work, he may modify the scenario so that some of the aliens are still alive to make things interesting and add a new twist to the situation. This will also require a great deal of work on the part of the gamemaster.

Numerous details must be covered in a case like this, including alien stats, personalities, reactions, technology, history, and so on. I had thought about putting this into the scenario, but to do so would make it too large to print here. So, this is left up to the gamemaster.

The important point when actually running the scenario is to keep up the mystery of the dragons. The players should not know what they are facing—keep them guessing and try to keep them worried. The trails of death and destruction left behind by the dragonships should indicate something beyond the usual Romulan, Klingon, or Orion confrontation, but it should not lead the players into thinking that this is simply a *D & D* adventure in the *Star Trek* universe.

STAR TREK®

Finally, the dragonships are a powerful force to contend with, and even after the scenario is resolved, it is quite likely that all the ships will still be sitting on a world in Federation territory.

Perhaps this can lead to future adventures dealing with these ships.

- Is the main computer still active?
- Can it still command the dragonships?

- If the dragonships return, will they simply sit forever waiting for orders, or will they take up other actions?

These are just some of the things to think about. Good luck and have fun. I hope you enjoy playing this scenario as much as I did writing it. Ω

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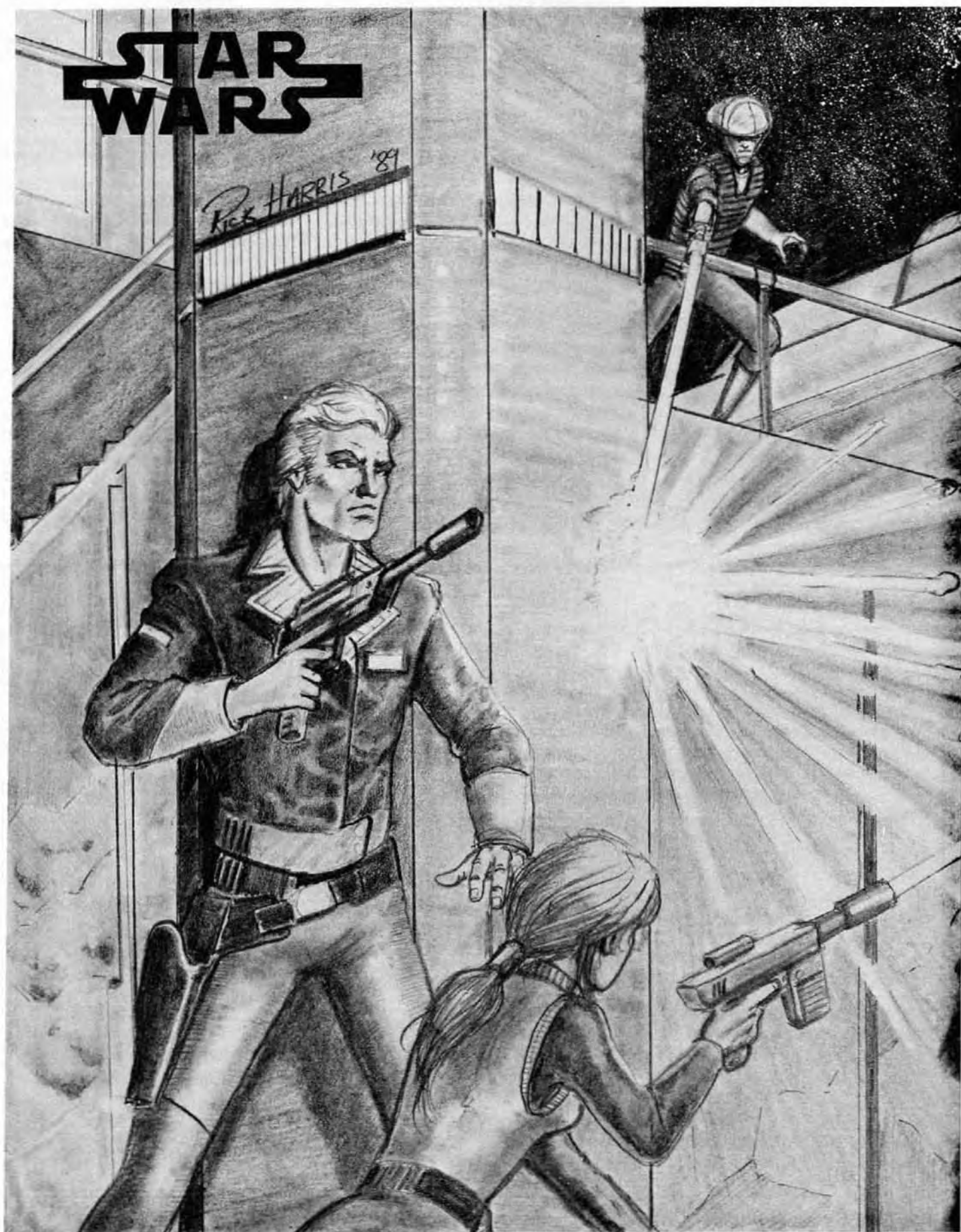
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Rebel 1: "I don't believe how I let myself get talked into these things! Tell me again why it is that we have left Rebel Alliance headquarters and are travelling half-way across the galaxy to a backwater world full of cutthroats and thieves."

Smuggler: "Listen carefully, dim one. Egot Pai-4-Yem is a crime lord. I owe him 25,000 credits. He'll break my knees if I don't pay up. But you can't just mail that kind of money to a crime lord; he expects you to deliver it in person. Kapich?"

Rebel 2: "Okay, okay. So we've got to deliver it personally. But why couldn't Egot have chosen a more savory spot for his headquarters? Why such a shoddy planet?"

Smuggler: "I beg your pardon. This shoddy planet you're talking about happens to be my homeland. It's one of the few interesting spots left in the galaxy."

Rebel 3: "That's what you said about Hoth!"

Smuggler: "Alright, alright, cool it you guys. We're about to leave hyperspace."

Rebel 3: "Right on target. There she is, fellows—we've reached the Harridan system."

Rebel 1: "Hey, look at that! There's a *Victory*-class destroyer orbiting the planet. It appears that the Empire has found your homeland interesting as well."

Smuggler: "I've got a very bad feeling about this."

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

It is mighty handy having smugglers join the Rebel Alliance. For one thing, smugglers are experts at getting items past Imperial customs agents. For another, they tend to be very seasoned pilots and navigators—talents that the Rebellion always has a demand for. Perhaps most importantly, however, smugglers bring numerous small, private vessels to the Alliance, allowing the Rebels' other ships to concentrate on larger actions.

People tend to forget that smugglers are often in hock up to their eyelids to less than savory "businessmen," individuals who would love to seize the smugglers' ships should they default on their loans. Naturally, a smuggler's dream is to gather enough credits to pay off his indebtedness, but making the payment is often extremely dangerous. Crime lords and loan sharks are notoriously untrustworthy, always looking for some way to take the payment and still seize the ship, even if it requires murder. In this adventure, you will have a chance to travel to the planet Harridan with a smuggler friend and help him find the crime lord he is indebted to in order to make payment in full. If you are brave and resourceful, you might even survive the experience.

WARNING!

If you intend to be a player in this adventure, you should read no further. The material that follows reveals information only a gamemaster should possess.

GAMEMASTER'S INTRODUCTION

It is best if the player characters' party already includes a smuggler, and the smuggler has, in working for the Rebel Alliance, had enough opportunity to

earn the credits necessary to pay off his debt. If the PCs do not have a smuggler in their group, however, they can receive this mission as an assignment from Rebel leadership, and the smuggler can be played as a non-player character. If one of the party members is a smuggler, you should fill him in beforehand on some of the background information for this adventure. He should know something about the world—if he has not already chosen a homeworld, Harridan can serve as his own. The smuggler should also be somewhat familiar with the description of Egot Pai-4-Yem, the crime lord who holds the title to his ship. Finally, the smuggler will need to be cognizant of Egot's instructions for making contact so he can explain them to the rest of the group.

The instructions are, as revealed below, to arrive at Spaceport City, check into the Lullaby Motel as honeymooners, and wait for further instructions. Obviously, a mate is going to be needed to keep up the fiction of being a newlywed couple. If no members of the opposite sex are in the party, or if none will submit to playing the part of the smuggler's new spouse, an appropriate NPC will have to be convinced to help out. This, in itself, could comprise a whole separate episode, and the GM should be prepared for such possibilities.

Adventure Background

Located on the fringe of Imperial space, the planet Harridan was originally used as a prison colony in the dim ages past. Even after it was opened to full colonization, it continued to draw the rogues and rebels of the galaxy. Together, they built a society in which laws were kept to a bare minimum, and cunning and daring were the two most admired qualities a being could possess. It was on this wild and woolly frontier world that the perfidious Egot Pai-4-Yem began, just a few years ago, to set up his criminal empire, in the very heart of Harridan's capital, Spaceport City. Egot quickly came into conflict with the city's various ruling powers, but he has demonstrated a real talent for elusiveness, always remaining just out of the authorities' (such as they are) reach.

It is also on this planet that the party's smuggler was born. From here, he launched out into space in hope of making his fortune. If he can get Egot Pai-4-Yem's metaphorical claws out of his pocketbook, he might yet succeed.

The Planet Harridan

Harridan is a world of wild, rocky cliffs, dim forests, and tempestuous seas. Its inhabitants are primarily human, although there is a healthy mix of alien types as well—some almost never seen in other parts of the galaxy. The planet's cities tend to be haphazardly laid collections of buildings made from all sorts of materials, ranging from wood to stone to plastisteel and formex. Almost all business is conducted by small, intensely independent firms, and many of them operate on the very edge of Harridan's few laws. Population in the cities is extremely high, and traffic reflects this fact. Spaceport City's twisted streets, for example, are full almost around-the-clock with all sorts of traffic, ranging from pedestrians to foot-drawn taxis to expensive hover vehicles. Listed prices for goods and services are also very high in these cities, but it is expected that the customer will haggle them down to a reasonable level. Weapons are often seen in public, but as is the case throughout the galaxy, using weapons unthinkingly or carrying large weapons and heavy body armor in public are sure ways to draw unwelcome attention to oneself. And Harridan's police forces are more than ready to dispense their own brand of justice on the streets.

Egot Pai-4-Yem

Egot Pai-4-Yem is a tall, almost skeletal humanoid with large, staring eyes and saggy, corpse-colored skin. His lisping voice echoes deeply from his large, bony chest. Behind his mournful appearance, however, lurks a quick, cruel mind that has ordered the deaths of hundreds. Egot cannot stand to admit defeat, and as a consequence, he sometimes takes incredible risks in order to gain the upper hand in a situation. Numerous scars attest to the number of dangerous scrapes he has

gotten into because of his pride. Due to his cadaverous appearance, and also because of his deadliness, Egot is often referred to on Harridan as "The Boneman," a fact that will be very important to the players in this adventure.

Adventure Summary

Having decided to help their buddy pay off his debt to the evil Egot Pai-4-Yem, the player characters accompany their smuggler friend to the planet Harridan. Their plan is to land quickly, contact the crime lord, pay him his money, and quickly leave again. Immediately upon entering the Harridan system, however, the PCs discover that things are not going to be that simple. For one thing, there is an Imperial *Victory*-class destroyer, the *Titan*, orbiting Harridan, indicating an Imperial interest in the world. Cautiously passing the destroyer, the party lands in Starport City and follows Egot Pai-4-Yem's instructions concerning how to contact him. In so doing, they may end up chasing a purse snatcher, visiting a museum, brawling in a cantina, traversing the city sewers, and holding a firefight with blasters in an abandoned warehouse, a firefight that is cut short by the arrival of scores of Harridan's police.

In the ensuing confusion, Egot and his closest bodyguards escape, accidentally leaving the title to the smuggler PC's ship behind where the Rebels can easily pick it up. If they don't pick up the title, the police will—either way, it's out of Egot's hands. Deciding that they honestly tried to pay the debt and that possessing the ship's title frees them from Egot's power, the player characters should be able to lift off from Harridan and prepare to return home. For some reason, the Imperial destroyer, *Titan*, orbiting the planet, gives them a thorough going over as they leave and follows them as they head for their hyperspace entry point. As the PCs pass Harridan's small moon, a tiny fighter craft attacks their ship in a kamikaze-like effort to destroy them. The group is quick to learn that it is Egot Pai-4-Yem trying to gain vengeance for their having brought the police to his doorstep. Drawn by the battle, the Imperial destroyer quickly

approaches. Just before it closes to tractor beam range, the PCs should be able to make the jump to hyperspace, leaving Egot to face the Empire alone.

EPISODE ONE: HARRIDAN'S HONEYMOON

At the urging of the group's smuggler, the player characters are convinced to journey to the Harridan system to pay off a debt of 25,000 credits to the evil crime lord Egot Pai-4-Yem. Along the way, the smuggler player can tell the rest of the group what he knows of Harridan and Egot Pai-4-Yem, explaining in particular his instructions for contacting the crime lord. All the smuggler knows for sure is that he was told that if he ever needed to contact Egot, he and a companion of the opposite sex were to check into the Lullaby Motel, a sleazy establishment just outside the spaceport's bulk cargo gate. When checking in, he and his companion are supposed to sign the motel's register as "Henry and Martha Buntwhistle." Then they are simply supposed to wait for further instructions. They are expected to be able to respond at a moment's notice, so they should have a satchel with the 25,000 credits inside at hand at all times.

Contact

The GM can have Egot's representatives take some time, maybe several days, to make contact with the "newlyweds." This time of waiting may make the smuggler begin to feel a little foolish, and it can generate some light-hearted fun as the rest of the group wonders aloud whether or

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not they have come on a fool's errand. But in the spirit of a *Star Wars* adventure, do not tediously play out each hour of waiting. Instead, mention that an hour passes, then two, then six, and so forth, then jump ahead to the next stage of the episode.

That next stage is brought about when a bottle of very cheap champagne is sent to the "honeymooners." A card attached simply says, "From a friend." Enclosed in the card are two tickets to the Museum of Flight on Nelson Boulevard.

The Snatcher

When the PCs step out into the street to hail a taxi for Nelson Boulevard, a purse snatcher grabs the satchel full

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of credits and begins running through the crowds and traffic. (For the snatcher's statistics, see page 68.) Naturally, the PCs follow him. After chasing him for several blocks (and probably becoming scattered in the process) the group's faster members begin to close on the snatcher, and he drops the satchel and melts into the crowd. The PCs take a few moments to make sure all of the credits are there, then they probably reassemble and resume their trip to the museum. What the group does not know is that the purse snatcher was a plainclothes police officer who grabbed the bag simply to plant a bug on it. The bug is a hair-thin wire that has been slipped into one of the bag's seams. (If someone *very* closely inspects the satchel, they should make a Perception roll to find the bug. The referee may have to find another way to get the police to the warehouse scene later in the adventure.) From this point on in the adventure, members of Spaceport City's police force will be following the player characters at all times, and the more perceptive members of the party might notice this, although they will have no way of knowing that the shadowers are the police. In running this portion of the episode, the referee should work to keep the PCs

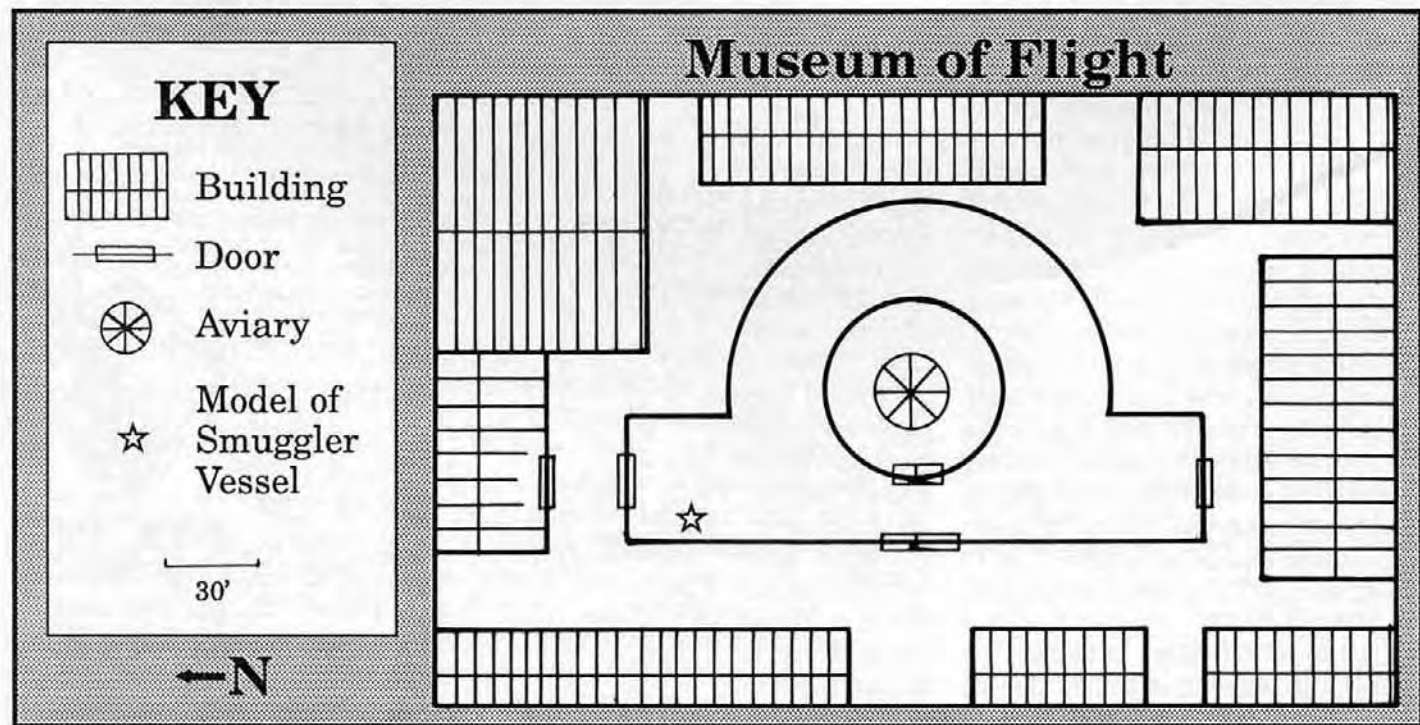
from pulling out blasters and blowing the snatcher away. Describe the heavy crowds of innocent bystanders through which the snatcher is running. Explain to them that the difficulty number to hit the snatcher in such circumstances is at least 30 and that they cannot use a Force Point to increase their chances without being awarded a Dark Side point for using the Force irresponsibly. Tell them that the streets are full of young children who have just been let out of school. Do whatever is necessary, but don't let them shoot the snatcher. The players have no way of knowing it, but their survival in the warehouse scene might depend upon the police having followed them. The referee should use the same tactics to keep the PCs from shooting the disguised police who trail them throughout the adventure. If they do shoot the police, they may have to make a genuine escape from jail at the end of the adventure.

EPISODE TWO: THE MUSEUM OF FLIGHT

After retrieving the satchel full of credits from the purse snatcher in the last episode, the Rebels continue on to the Museum of Flight. Arriving at the museum, they have some time to explore the place. The Museum of Flight

consists primarily of a circular edifice surrounding an outdoor aviary. But extending to either side along the front entrance of the building are two straight wings (see the diagram). Upon entering the museum's front doors, the PCs find themselves facing another set of double doors that leads to the central courtyard. Through the large windows in these doors an immense outdoor aviary can be seen, filled with hundreds of colorful native birds. All the building's interior corridors are lined with exhibits of flighted things, including paintings, sculptures, photo displays, and even dioramas. Included in the displays are native birds and insects, a gliding lizard the size of a doberman, and models of man-made objects such as kites, gliders, planes, repulsorlift vehicles, and even spacecraft. The plaques beneath the displays identify them all as having sprung from Harridan. Strangely enough, in the northern wing, near the end, there is even a model of the smuggler character's ship.

If the Rebels examine this model (and they certainly should), they will note that the plaque beneath it identifies it as the *Minnow Hawk*, a primitive glider incapable of sustained flight for more than 20 seconds at a time, and then only if the winds are still. A closer look at the



display and a successful Perception roll of Very Easy difficulty will reveal that the model is not actually attached to the pedestal upon which it rests. In fact, there is evidence that a previous model was here but was torn off the pedestal, leaving some splinters of plastic and wood behind. At this point, if the GM desires, a museum security guard can accost the group, demanding that they "please refrain from touching the displays." If his interest is drawn any more (such as by party members arguing with him), he will notice the splinters and accuse the PCs of breaking the display, then leave to report them to the museum director. This event can be especially useful in getting the party moving again, if its members have been stalling or wasting time.)

Finally, if someone in the Rebel group succeeds at a Moderate difficulty roll versus his Perception, it will become obvious that the model of the smuggler's ship has been positioned to point toward the exit at the end of the wing. The only problem is that the exit bears a big sign that says "Use This Exit Only in Case of Emergency." Opening the door will set off a raucous alarm, bringing museum security people running to the area, and causing spectators to mill about in confusion. (See page 68 for the muse-

um guards' statistics.) However, through the exit, just across a narrow alley, the group will spot the entrance to a sleazy little cantina with a sign that says, "The Boneman's Rest."

EPISODE THREE: THE BONEMAN'S REST

The Rebels have had a couple of tense moments (the *Victory*-class ship, the purse snatcher, and possibly some trouble with guards at the Museum of Flight). They have had a puzzle or two to solve, but probably have been in no real danger. When they enter The Boneman's Rest, however, they find themselves stepping into the middle of a fight. Inside the cantina, a dozen customers are engaged in a spirited brawl, and a bartender and a waiter are wading through the press, wielding blackjacks on the ringleaders. Three barmaids stand near the door to the kitchen, with expressions ranging from disgust to jaded boredom. (See the map of The Boneman's Rest and the cantina occupants' statistics.)

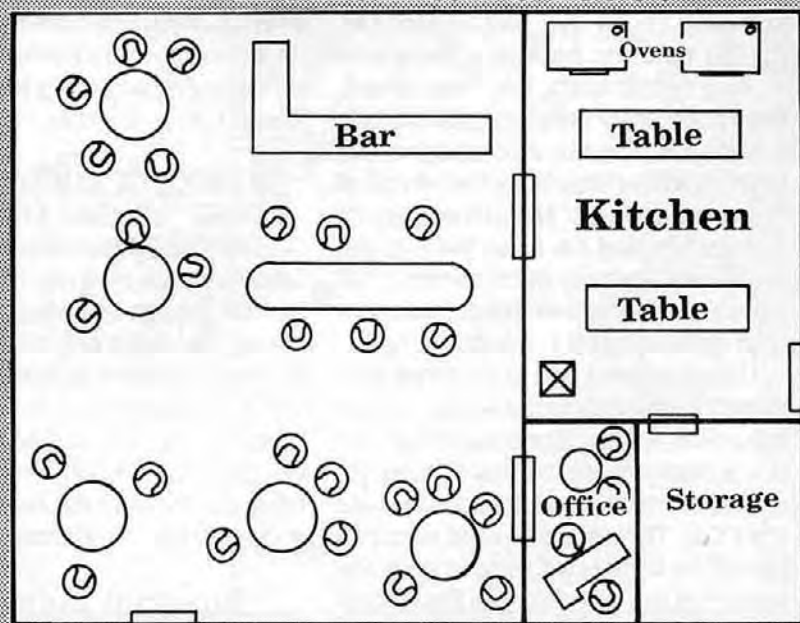
Joining in the Brawl

As the Rebels take this in, they will notice the brawlers begin to turn their attention from each other to the bartender and waiter who are trying to

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break up the fight. With all the conscious brawlers cooperating, the employees quickly find themselves hard-pressed. What is more, a few of the sleazier looking customers begin to stalk the waitresses. It is assumed that the PCs will attempt to aid the beleaguered employees, recognizing that those employees are likely to be the next link in their attempt to reach Egot Pai-4-Yem. If they do not choose to join the fight, some of the brawlers will begin to attack the PCs. As new entrants in the fight, the Rebels can conduct one complete round of actions before the brawlers become aware enough of their presence to fight back. If, despite these advantages, the PCs still find themselves fighting a losing battle, the GM can have a few new cantina employees enter the scene from the main entrance. These additional employees have come to relieve the earlier shift of workers in running the cantina.

The Boneman's Rest



KEY

- Door
- Trapdoor
- Table
- Chair

15'

N↑

After the Brawl

After the fight is finished, the cantina's bartender will call the local police to come and collect the brawlers. Since the PCs fought on the side of the employees, the police will be content to let them remain after a quick questioning for facts. The waiter will show the Rebels to a table and hand out menus. While the PCs look them over, a few new customers will enter from the street, and soon the cantina will be conducting business as if nothing untoward had happened.

Only a pile of a few broken chairs remains near the kitchen door as testimony to the earlier action. Looking over the menu, the Rebels will quickly spot "Egot's Lava Crab Feast (price variable with season)." Anyone who orders this dish will be asked, "Would you please come back to the kitchen to pick out your crab?"

In the kitchen, the group will be shown to an aquarium containing a few rock crabs. The waiter will pretend to look them over, then tell the Rebels, "I'm sorry, but our selection appears to be very poor at the moment; perhaps you would like to speak to the manager about it." Upon receiving an affirmative reply from the PCs, he will lead them to a trapdoor in the kitchen floor and bid them enter. Under the trapdoor, the group finds a ladder leading down about 15 feet into the city sewer—a subsurface tunnel that leads toward the east.

EPISODE FOUR: UNWELCOME GUESTS

Following the tunnel, the Rebels walk about 200 yards before coming to its opposite end. There they find another ladder leading to a trapdoor above them. If they listen at the trapdoor, they will hear, at most, a muted echo as of distant voices in an enormous space.

Egot's Lair

Upon exiting the tunnel, the PCs discover themselves to be in the middle of a vast, nearly empty warehouse. (See the diagram for the layout of the warehouse.) At the north end is a group of offices. Atop this is another open area, and it is here that Egot Pai-4-Yem sits, like a king on his throne, conducting

business. Flanking Egot are two huge bodyguards, and a quick glance around the warehouse reveals another dozen guards watching the streets outside through the grimy windows. (Statistics for Egot, his bodyguards, and the dozen guards are given on page 68.)

Shortly after the PCs enter the warehouse, Egot will call down to them from his perch atop the office structure. "Stan' ware jue arrh" he says, "Ahh (insert smuggler's name, suitably slurred), mah fren, id iz zoe goot to see jue again. Jue brod yeh creditz?" Upon receiving an affirmative answer to this question, Egot orders that one PC (a female if one is present) bring the bag up to him, while the others remain where they stand with their hands in open view. Before the chosen Rebel can act, however, a new factor enters the situation. One of the guards watching out the windows at the front of the building suddenly turns and cries, "Hey boss! The streets are swarmin' with cops!" Egot leaps to his feet, shouting at the Rebels, "Jue led yem here doo trap me!" Then, as he and his two bodyguards prepare to flee, he points at the PCs and orders his other men, "Kill yem!"

The Battle in the Warehouse

As the battle begins, Egot and his two bodyguards disappear beyond the edge of the platform on which they were standing. They are headed for the hangar near the back to escape in a waiting fighter craft, the *Razorshark*. (See page 68 for details on this craft.) A few rounds after the action begins, the building will be shaken by the takeoff of Egot's escape craft. While nine of Egot's guards turn and fire upon the Rebels, the remaining three (those nearest the warehouse's main entrance) concentrate on holding off the police outside.

In each round, one of the three door guards will be incapacitated by fire from the police, and on round four the police will actually enter the warehouse (or sooner if the GM needs them to save the PCs). The details of what happens during the firefight will depend upon the actions of the PCs. If any of the Rebels make it to the platform upon which Egot had his seat, an Easy roll versus Per-

ception will reveal the title to the smuggler's ship laying out on Egot's table, left behind in his sudden flight. If the PCs are still in the building when the police break in, the police will size up the situation, and, realizing that the PCs are fighting Egot's men, they will not fire upon the PCs unless the PCs attack them first or try to escape (through the tunnel—all other exits are covered by police outside).

If the PCs succeed in escaping down the tunnel, either before or after the police enter the warehouse, they will have a few bare moments before the police follow them. If the Rebels escape from the police, they will be sought throughout the city. Only if they quickly leave the planet will they escape. If the police capture the PCs, they will question them thoroughly, giving them a very tough time about associating with a notorious crime lord. During their time with the police, the Rebels will learn of the bug that was planted by the purse snatcher in the first episode. After a few hours the police will let the Rebels go, warning them to choose their acquaintances more carefully, and confiscating the 25,000 credits as "evidence against the crime lord." Any argument on this point will result in threats of detention and even of being turned over to the Imperials in orbit as troublemakers.

The GM may wish to remind the players that, on Harridan, the police are little better than the criminals they battle. Assuming that the Rebels are not detained by Starport City's police, they are free to leave Harridan.

EPISODE FIVE: IT'S SO HARD TO SAY GOODBYE

The Rebels did what they could to complete their mission, having lost the 25,000 credits to police but perhaps having found the ship's title they came for. Even if no one picked up the ship's title in the warehouse, police will probably have confiscated it, so it is no longer in Egot's possession. The Rebels now have only to leave the Harridan system and head back to headquarters.

Imperial Inspection

Lifting off from the planet will be no problem, assuming that the PCs have

spoken with the police about the fight in Egot's warehouse or, if they ran from the police, that they have wasted no time in getting back to their ship. Once in orbit, however, they find that the Imperial destroyer, *Titan*, takes a very close interest in them for some reason. The commander of the *Titan* demands that the PCs halt and allow a customs inspection team aboard to look their cargo over. If the PCs comply, the customs officials will come aboard and conduct a very superficial inspection before returning to the destroyer.

If the PCs try to escape, the *Titan* will snag their ship in a tractor beam, and the inspection will be more thorough, possibly finding any illegal modifications made to the ship. If this is the case, the Rebels will still be able to avoid trouble by paying a bribe to the leader of the inspection team, who hints very strongly that such a payment would be favorably looked upon. Once the PCs' vessel has passed inspection, it will be cleared to leave, but just as it is beginning to move away, the *Titan* will radio for the PCs to halt once again, as the computer check on their vessel's serial number has turned up a few abnormalities.

A recheck reveals that the computer operator merely entered an incorrect digit, and the PCs are free to leave. In

actuality, the destroyer has no reason to suspect the PCs of any wrong-doing. This event is merely included to increase the players' tension as they prepare to leave the Harridan system and to make sure they realize the destroyer is watching them—a fact that will be important during the next event.

Egot's Revenge

Leaving the *Titan* behind, the Rebels continue on toward their hyperspace jump point. Along the way, they pass near Harridan's moon. Unexpectedly, from the surface of the moon a small fighter vessel, the *Razorshark*, launches itself at the PCs' ship and begins to fire upon them. Over their vessel's communicator, the PCs hear the voice of Egot Pai-4-Yemswearing "I will didroy jue!"

With this, they discover that the *Razorshark* is the vessel in which Egot escaped from the warehouse earlier, and he has been lurking on Harridan's moon, waiting for this chance for revenge. (See page 68 for statistics on the *Razorshark*.) Egot has no real hope of destroying the Rebels' vessel, but he has been driven almost to madness by his anger at them. Unfortunately, the Rebels do not have the leisure to do battle with Egot, since the fighting

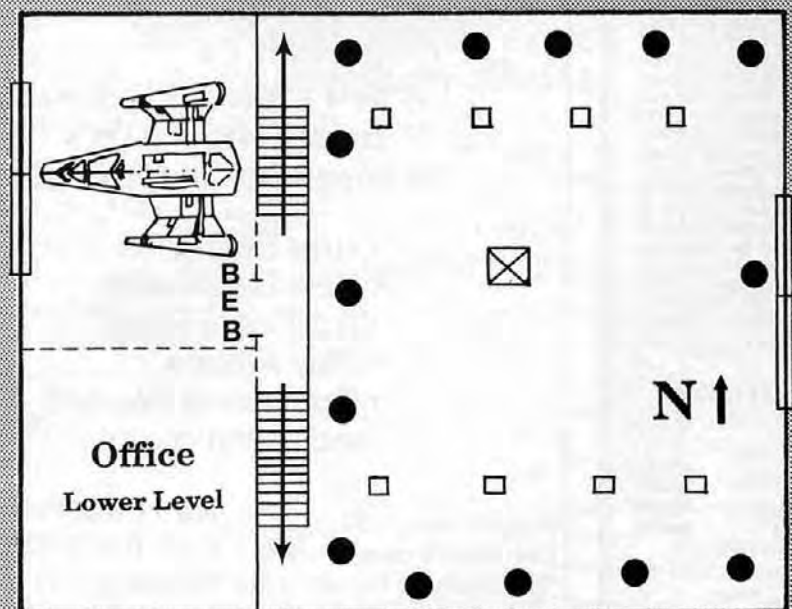
STAR WARS

quickly draws the attention of the Imperial destroyer once again, and it approaches rapidly, disgorging TIE fighters as it comes. Shaken by fire from Egot's ship, the Rebels work frantically to reach their hyperspace jump point before the *Titan*'s TIE fighters can close and before Egot cripples their ship.

The GM can play up the dramatic tension of the scene by interspersing description of the *Razorshark*'s attacks with radio messages between the TIE fighters as they close ("Fifteen seconds to contact: Lock on targeting computers and arm your laser cannons").

Just before the *Titan*'s TIEs come into range, the Rebel ship will reach its jump point. If the PCs have not already destroyed Egot's vessel by this time, the last thing they see as they leave the Harridan system is the TIE fighters firing upon him. With this, they make the jump to hyperspace and head toward their next adventure, wherever it may lie.

Warehouse



KEY

- Door
- Stair down
- Trapdoor
- Pillar
- Guard
- Egot
- Bodyguard

30'

THE PURSE SNATCHER**DEXTERITY:** 4D**Dodge:** 4D+2**Melee Parry:** 4D+1**PERCEPTION:** 3D**Hide/Sneak:** 4D**STRENGTH:** 3D+2**Brawling:** 4D**Climbing/Jumping:** 4D+1**All Other Attributes and Skills:** 2D+1**Snatcher Weapons:** Bayonet**MUSEUM GUARDS****All Attributes:** 2D**Blaster:** 2D+2**Museum Guard Weapons:** Blaster pistol, club**CANTINA CUSTOMERS****All Attributes:** 2D**Brawling:** 2D+2**CANTINA BARTENDER****All Attributes:** 2D**Melee Parry:** 3D**Melee:** 3D+1**Brawling:** 3D+2**Bartender Weapons:** Blackjack (as club)**CANTINA WAITER****All Attributes:** 2D**Melee Parry:** 2D+1**Melee:** 2D+2**Brawling:** 3D**Walter Weapons:** Blackjack (as club)**EGOT PAI-4-YEM****DEXTERITY:** 3D+2**Blaster:** 4D+1**Dodge:** 4D**KNOWLEDGE:** 4D**Streetwise:** 4D+2**MECHANICAL:** 3D**Starship Gunnery:** 3D+2**Starship Piloting:** 4D+1**Starship Shields:** 3D+1**PERCEPTION:** 3D**Bargain:** 4D**Command:** 3D+2**Con:** 4D**STRENGTH:** 3D**TECHNICAL:** 2D**Egot's Weapons:** Heavy blaster pistol, vibroblade**EGOT'S BODYGUARDS****DEXTERITY:** 3D**Blaster:** 4D**Brawling Parry:** 3D+2**Melee:** 4D**KNOWLEDGE:** 2D+1**Streetwise:** 2D+2**Survival:** 3D**STRENGTH:** 3D+1**Brawling:** 4D**All Other Attributes and Skills:** 2D**Bodyguard Weapons:** Blaster rifle, vibro-axe, bayonet**EGOT'S OTHER GUARDS****DEXTERITY:** 3D**Blaster:** 3D+1**Dodge:** 3D+2**All Other Attributes and Skills:** 2D**Guard Weapons:** Blaster pistol**THE RAZORSHARK****Craft:** Wyndham Systems small fighter**Type:** Intrasystem Fighter Craft**Length:** 7.1 meters**Crew:** One pilot**Passengers:** Three**Cargo Capacity:** 90 kilograms**Consumables:** One day**Hyperdrive Multiplier:** None**Nav Computer:** None**Hyperdrive Backup:** None**Sublight Speed:** 6D+1**Maneuverability:** 4D+2**Hull:** 1D+1**Weapons:** Three laser cannons (fire linked)**Fire Control:** 4D**Combined Damage:** 5D+1**Shields:** 1D+2 Ω**NEW for MegaTraveller!!!****Detailed Starship Deck Plans In 25mm**

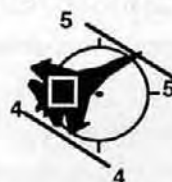
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If it may please your most Gracious Lord,
Here is my preliminary research report on Company A of the Legiones Astartes Iceriver Guards Chapter. Although this is but one of 1000 chapters found within the Imperium, certain information has only recently come to my humble attention, including notes I have just located on the chapter's home world, uniforms, and rites, and specifics on its personnel profiles, equipment, and capabilities.

I realize this information is not complete in every detail, particularly in the area of chapter history, but I beg of you to acknowledge that my project studies remain unfinished. I promise to have more for you in the future.

Your most humble servant,

Linus Minimus

Administratum Scribe Novitiate
Linus Minimus,
Temple of Vega

Linus,
Not too horribly bad—for a start.
You may yet prove worthy of the title scribe.

Lord Argus

Lord Argus,
Instructor of Scribes



Iceriver Guards Chapter

A Marine TO & E

By John A. Theisen

To the Iceriver Guards, the planet New Coventry is called home. This hostile and frigid world, on an edge of the galaxy near the Imperium's frontier, can best be described as a cross between extreme arctic wilderness and a Death World. When advance scouts were searching for a suitable planet on which to base the chapter, this one was rejected at first, due to the plethora of unfriendly life forms inhabiting the surface. However, a relatively remote oceanic island was spotted during the second overflight. The chapter's Imperial commander agreed it could be cleared and settled. In short order, the area was sterilized of native life and a fortress/monastery was established.

The presence of a base on New Coventry is neither a closely kept secret nor is it widely publicized. Few citizens of the Imperium have heard of the world, and its existence as a base is not common knowledge even among members of the Administratum. Though officers are at liberty to disclose their origin, the guards' standing policy has been to volunteer information only upon demand.

The fortress/monastery is an elaborate complex, both above and below ground, with sophisticated quarters, laboratories, and related support facilities. Though excellent surveillance is maintained in all

directions, the chapter base defenses emphasize protecting against orbital assaults since this is seen as the most probable direction of attack. This island is the sole location free of native life, and all major landmasses and bodies of water remain filled with predators not uncommon to Death Worlds. To date, the fortress has never been attacked.

CHAPTER UNIFORMS, COLORS, AND BADGES

The Iceriver Guards' color scheme is ultramarine blue with pea-green and brown. Armor is generally painted this shade of blue with three wavy stripes (green, brown, green) running down the length of both sides from helmet to soles. The width of the stripe is an indication of the wearer's rank—the wider the stripe, the higher the rank. The chapter banner and badge bear the diagram of a tri-colored waterfall.

Another badge of honor for chapter marines involves injecting a permanent, nontoxic, brownish dye into the marine's forearm, with a separate line along the arm, while others have had it inserted in such a way to form simple skin patterns.

COMPANY TACTICS AND TRANSPORTS

Though the chapter occasionally fights as a full unit, some individual companies have become proficient using specialized tactics for specific situations. Distribution of personal weapons is more or less standardized throughout the chapter, and the training thus consists of acclimating the marines to certain forms of weather and terrain conditions. Company A, in particular, enjoys combat in wooded areas, and the 6th squad has been equipped with chameleon armor and uniform accessories to aid in this role.

Company A shares the vehicle transport pool with the remainder of the Iceriver Guards, but a small walker has been directly attached to the unit for the captain's personal use. On extremely rare occasions, this vehicle will be loaned out to a squad and employed in its capacity as a recce unit.

ORGANIZATION, PROFILES, AND EQUIPMENT

The table of organization and equipment for the company is broken down by squads. Each model's rank/position (sergeant or marine) is given first, followed by the model's creature profile as presented in this format:

M WS BS S T W I A / Ld Int Cl WP

Sergeants are assumed to be personalities. Creature profiles for sergeants were created using the random heroes rules, assuming random points for a champion added to the basic creature profile. All other marines use the basic creature profile, unmodified.

The second line in the TO & E lists that model's normal personal weaponry. Any weapon appearing in parentheses is that model's personal preference for close combat.

The final paragraph for each squad lists any additional equipment available for that squad's general use

1ST SQUAD

Sergeant

4 4 6 4 3 1 4 1 / 9 9 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, hand flamer

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, needler

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, heavy bolter

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, lasgun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, lasgun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, lasgun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, lasgun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, lasgun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, lasgun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, lasgun (bolt pistol)

In addition to its powered armor, this squad also has one bio-scanner, one energy-scanner, one rad counter, and two suspensors.

2ND SQUAD

Sergeant

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 9

Knife, bolt pistols (2), crack grenades

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, multi-laser

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, plasma gun

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, flamer

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

In addition to powered armor, this squad also has an infra-vision visor for the sergeant and one rad counter.

3RD SQUAD

Sergeant

4 4 4 4 3 1 5 2 / 9 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistols (2)

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, flamer

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

In addition to powered armor, this squad also has one bio-scanner and one energy-scanner.

4TH SQUAD

Sergeant

4 6 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 9 9 9 9

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun, chainsword, blind grenades

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, shuriken catapult

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, flamer

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

In addition to powered armor, this squad also has one bio-scanner.



5TH SQUAD

Sergeant

4 4 5 4 3 1 5 2 / 9 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistols (2)

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, multi-melta

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, heavy bolter

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

In addition to powered armor, this squad also has one bio-scanner and one energy-scanner.



6TH SQUAD

Sergeant

4 6 5 4 3 1 5 2 / 9 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, heavy plasma gun

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, las-cannon

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

In addition to powered armor, this squad also has chameleon for everyone, one energy-scanner, an infra-vision visor for the sergeant, one rad counter, and one targeter.

8TH SQUAD

Sergeant

4 4 5 4 3 1 5 2 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, D-cannon

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, flamer

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (hand flamer)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun, frag grenades (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (lasipistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

In addition to powered armor, this squad also has one energy-scanner and one rad counter.

7TH SQUAD

Sergeant

4 4 4 4 3 2 6 1 / 9 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, hand flamer, power glove

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, D-cannon

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, flamer

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, plasma gun

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

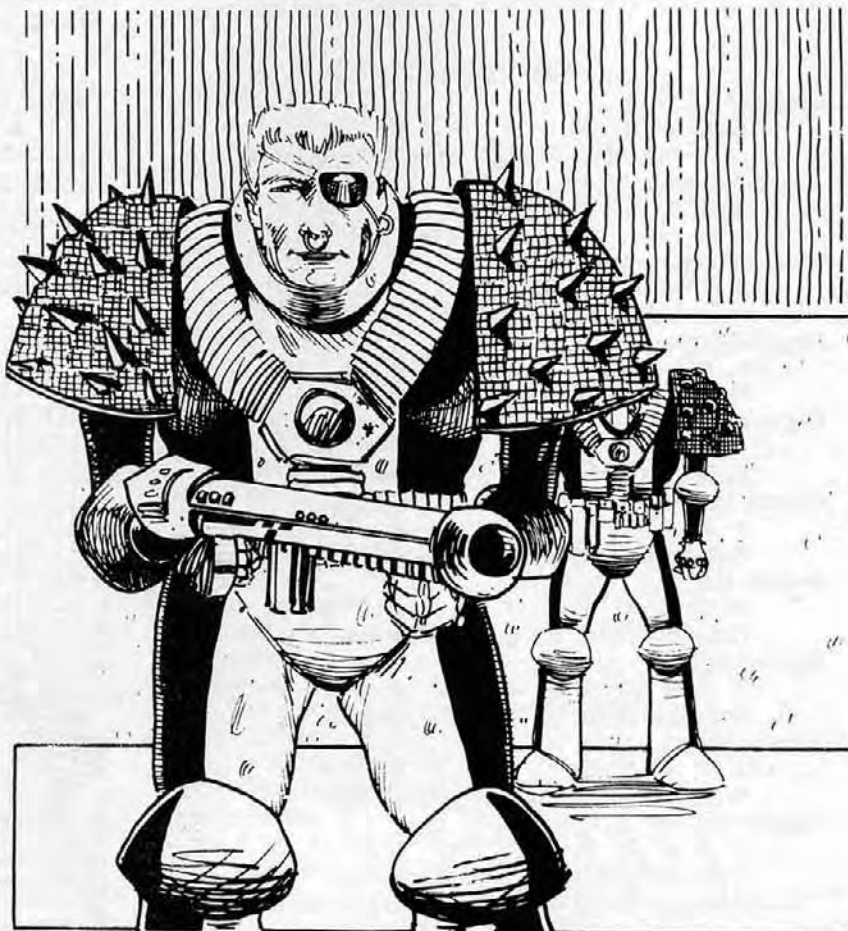
Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (bolt pistol)

In addition to its powered armor, the 7th squad also has one targeter.



9TH SQUAD

Sergeant

4 4 4 4 3 1 5 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun, chainsword

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, graviton gun

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (power axe)

Except for powered armor, this squad has no other special equipment.



10TH SQUAD

Sergeant

4 5 5 4 4 2 4 2 / 8 8 9 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, needler

Special Weapons Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, melta-gun

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

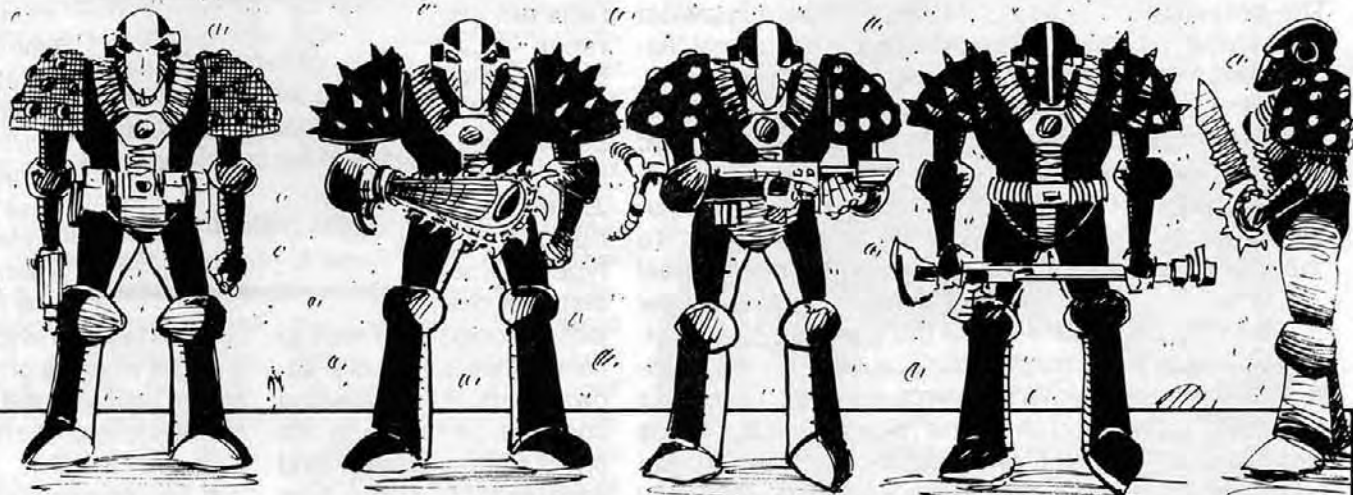
Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

Regular Marine

4 4 4 4 3 1 4 1 / 8 8 8 8

Knife, bolt pistol, bolt gun (chainsword)

In addition to powered armor, this squad also has one bio-scanner, one energy-scanner, and one rad counter. Ω



Julia Martin's

REVIEWS

Shadowrun

Shadowrun™. \$28.00.
FASA Corporation.

Designers: Bob Charrette, Paul Hume, Tom Dowd.

Complete role-playing game. 216-page hard-bound book.

When I heard that FASA was working on a cyberpunk genre role-playing game incorporating magic, I thought, "Oh no, this is going to be sickeningly cute or too strange to be believed." But now that *Shadowrun* is out, I must admit that they've convinced me. The background for

the game develops a plausible reason for the existence of magic in cyberpunk times. The presence of fantasy races (called *metahumans* in *Shadowrun*) like orks, elves, dwarves, and trolls is tied together with the resurgence of magic (explaining why they weren't around for so long). Best of all, the elves aren't "cute." They're deadly.

BACKGROUND

How do they justify magic in a world where bionic limb replacements are fairly commonplace, a new set of brand-name cybereyes can be purchased without a second thought, and one can link into a computer through a fiber optic cable to run its

information pathways and steal important data? It seems that the level of magic in the world varies in a cyclical manner. For the last 3000 years or so, Earth has been going through a "magic depression."

During that depression, all the magic dependent races, like the great dragons, hibernated in one form or another. Elves, dwarves, orks, and trolls began to look just like

Shadowrun n. Any movement, action, or series of such made in carrying out plans which are illegal or quasilegal.

—WorldWide WorldWatch, 2050 update

humans, until (presumably) no one remembered being anything other than human. With the resurgence in the level of

magic on Earth, the suppressed traits of elves and other races have been manifesting themselves; almost overnight many normal "humans" became virtually another race of being—metahuman. With the return of magic also came the return of humanity's ability to manipulate it—the "Awakening." To give you a glimpse of the feel of the game, I've quoted a few of the game's nifty "ambiance" quotes, like the *shadowrun* definition, throughout this review. I felt that it was better than retelling the entire game's timeline, which they do very well in the book itself.

CHARACTERS

Characters in *Shadowrun*

can be selected from 16 archetypes—basic character types which have natural niches within the background of *Shadowrun* (like character classes, but not quite so general).

If you can't find an archetype that you like, you can create your own by rating from 0-4 the five areas which define a character (listed on the Master Character Table) and then using the resulting points to build an archetype to your liking.

Due to some editorial problems, the rating system is slightly unclear; it is necessary to use all the priorities available from 0 to 4—one area (column on the table) must be rated 0, one must be rated 1, one 2, etc.

An important part of character creation is deciding on your contacts, the people you can turn to for information

"Never relax. Your run might be over, but someone, somewhere, is just starting his, and the target could be you."

—Kirk Hoff, Street Mage

and help. Contacts run the range from bartenders to gang members to tribesmen to Mr. Johnsons, the corporate types who dish out the jobs the corps don't want to handle themselves to shadowrunners. After selecting contacts and figuring out one's starting money (and generating an allergy type and severity if you're going to play a metahuman), characters are ready to start running the shadows.

THE HEART OF THE GAME

In game mechanics, the heart of *Shadowrun* is a skill check, which the game refers to as a success test and which is accomplished by rolling a certain number of six-sided dice and *not* adding them together. The numbers rolled are then individually compared to a target number—the rolls which equal or exceed the target number are successes, and those which do not are failures. A one is always a failure, and a six allows one to roll again and add the result to the six, continuing to do so until a number which is not six is rolled.

Usually, obtaining one success means that a character has succeeded at what he was attempting. More than one success either improves how well he suc-

ceeded or shortens the time the task takes for completion. Variations on this success test include the following:

● Resisted

success tests, in which, say, a target whom a character shoots gets to make a success test to resist the damage caused by the shot.

● And *opposed* success tests, in which two characters are trying to succeed at something, and one's success must be another's fail-

ure (this involves both making a success test, and the one with the most successes overall "wins").

The success test system is simple and easy to implement. It doesn't require adding large quantities of dice rolls together (which *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, unfortunately, does). And it is flexible enough to account for many different situations through basing the test on different skills or abilities, or the use of different target numbers for varying levels of difficulty.

COMBAT

Combat is something a shadowrunner has to deal with often. The combat system in *Shadowrun* allows combat sequences to be resolved speedily and still provides for great situational variation in character actions. It is able to do this because it is based on the same fundamental concept used throughout the game—the success test. Variations are made upon the resisted success test for the different kinds of combat—armed melee combat is different from firearm combat—but the variations are provided by utilizing a minimal number of modifiers which are summarized on a few (about four, total) pages of easy-to-read charts.

The designers have mercifully tried to avoid modifier "overload" by making most modifiers either a multiple of two (+2, -4) or simply a plus or minus 1. They have also tried to group into a pattern instances when they use a certain type of modifier. Thus, referees can try to recall the modifiers without seemingly having to memorize verbatim numbers "drawn from the

air"—for instance, all the visibility modifiers for firearms are multiples of two.

While grenade-throwing is handled in probably the most realistic "feeling" way I've ever seen in a combat system, and autofire weapons are also handled elegantly, I ran into one small problem in trying to use the autofire rules.

The effect of firing multiple bursts is to add to a weapon's recoil, thus worsening the firer's aim, but nowhere can I find recorded how many

"Watch your back. Shoot straight. Conserve ammo. And never, ever, cut a deal with a dragon."

—Street Proverb

shots are in a burst. Perhaps an errata will clear this question up.

MAGIC

While most role-playing games have a combat system, *Shadowrun* is unique in that it has both a magic system and a system for running the matrix (also known as netrunning or decking). Both systems have their foundation in the success test game mechanic, so they mesh easily and completely with the rest of the game.

The magic of *Shadowrun* comes in two forms: shamanistic and hermetic. Shamanistic mages manipulate the forces of magic through the help of a totem—a spirit guide who embodies the essence of a type of animal. Hermetic mages manipulate magic through ritual and formula, through learning the proper elements and motions to complete a spell. While the





two types of magic come from different directions, they can do many of the same things. Both types of magician can cast spells, ranging from healing spells to combat spells to illusions. They can summon and control spirits or elementals (spirits for shamans, elementals for hermetic mages) who can be bound to do their bidding. And they can journey into astral space and perform astral combat. Mages are arguably the most powerful characters in *Shadowrun*; they are also the most fragile, as too many brushes with death can wear down their ability to use magic until it is gone forever.

THE MATRIX

The technomancer, or decker, also runs in a different world—not one of astral beings, but one of electromagnetic impulses connecting directly with the neural impulses of his brain. The system for running the Matrix™ in *Shadowrun* allows for all the challenges and tensions found in such books as *Neuromancer* by Brian Gibson.

There's a deck design system in *Shadowrun*, so that computers—decks—can be custom-designed. PCs use their computer skill and their personalized decks to try to sneak into the global

telecommunications system and from there into a particular connected computer system. Once inside a system, a character's computer persona moves from system node to system node, break-

ing into each, sometimes easily, sometimes by fighting Intrusion Countermeasures (IC).

Inside the world of a computer system the decker hunts for information useful to him and his party which he can later sell or which might provide a clue as to how his party can pull off its latest shadowrun without getting killed. Each action that a decker performs in the system could be the one which sets it on alert, triggering Grey and Black IC which could burn up his deck or his brain.

OTHER NEAT STUFF

Shadowrun is full of wonderful game goodies. Its pages of equipment include cyber equipment, futuristic vehicles and firearms, and even magical equipment. The equipment section includes some fascinating illustrations of how cybertechnology is grafted into humans.

The section called "Contacts" includes illustrations and statistics for many of the standard NPCs player characters begin the game knowing, and each includes a brief statement of how that NPC

"Magic is not tuxedos, white rabbits and fake flowers anymore. It is Power."

—Arthur Garrett,
Chairman,
Department of Occult
Studies, UCLA

"thinks," from the NPC's point of view. To supplement the NPCs there is a meaty section, complete with a series of color plates, of

"Critters," animals and intelligent beings of a magical or supernatural nature, including dragons, elementals, krakens, wendigos, thunderbirds, and vampires. Finally, a chapter of back-

ground on Seattle is provided, along with a *Shadowrun* scenario, to provide a referee with background for launching his first *Shadowrun* campaign there.

EVALUATION

Shadowrun is a truly hot game. The only complaints I have are with some vague wording here and there, and some things which must have gotten dropped out or overlooked (like the number of shots in a burst, or the damage for hand razors—which is (Str/2)L2 on the *Referee's Screen*, sold separately). It's a great game value, a nicely put together book, and a lot of fun. I highly recommend it to anyone looking for something really new.

Space 101

Space 101. C2 Simulations. Play-by-mail game. Rules \$3.50, \$3.50 a turn, free setup. A complete game lasts 15 turns.

If you are looking for a fun, easy-to-learn, play-by-mail game from a reliable moderator, I would recommend *Space 101*.

Like many play-by-mail games, it is set in space (obvious from the title) and involves constructing and directing space ships to scout planetary systems, claim them (or steal them out from under another player), maintain control of them, and destroy other players' ships. Each of these basic game actions is also the primary goal of one of four types of empires which a player can direct—Scholars, Lawyers, Builders, and Pirates.

The game is won by amassing the greatest amount of victory points within the time limit of 15

turns. Each empire type gets the most points for accomplishing its main goal, and varying lesser amounts for completing other goals. Each empire type has a special ability unique to it to aid it in accomplishing its primary goal. For instance, the Lawyer empire type can "slap a lawsuit" on a system which forces all other ships in the system to leave 75 percent of the time, allowing the empire to avoid a possibly deadly combat sequence and, if strategically paired with other orders, to scout or claim a system with minimal risk.

Space 101 has several other factors to consider to make game strategy more interesting. Each empire type starts with a certain Economic Unit (EU) allowance and receives more EUs for controlling systems, which are worth a variable amount of EUs each. The EU allowance is decreased as the game goes on, so an empire becomes more and more dependent on the income from the systems it controls. Players have to balance pursuing the main goal of their empire type with maintaining control of enough systems to keep building new ships which, of course, cost EUs. (Previously built ships are constantly lost in battle).

The ship-building process is very easy to learn, but enough variables are included in ships to make designing each ship a challenge. Values for movement, offensive power, defensive power, and ecm (sort of like early warning radar, with a high value in this allowing you to strike first in battle) must be chosen and paid for. Part of the fun and strategy of ship design comes from trying to out think one's opponents'

design philosophy without building too big, too fast, and thus investing a lot of precious EUs in one vessel.

Other actions include spying on the empires you have met, naming systems previously undiscovered by others, declaring war (which allows you to claim another's system out from under him if you know the claim code), and building links, which enable a quick sort of movement directly from one linked system to another.

The rules for the game are very readable, clear, and only 14 pages long. Turn sheets are easy to fill out, and part of the ease of learning the game lies in the fact that the game's turn sequence proceeds exactly in the same order that a turn sheet is filled out. Once this is grasped, which actions are possible

becomes obvious. Rather than constantly having to refer to the rules about when a certain order will take effect, the turn sheet itself tells you by its very nature.

Space 101 turns run twice a month, and while getting a turn in on time can be strategically advantageous, submitting one after the turn's beginning date will not result in it not being run, as in many other games. While some players might complain that this is not as fair as simultaneous movement, it certainly yields less deadline stress, and, in my experience, more enjoyment, while playing the game.

Overall, *Space 101* is a good value for the price you pay, and it provides many hours of enjoyment without committing you to a game of epic saga length. Ω

GRAND ALLIANCE



"Grand Alliance" is a fully computer moderated play-by-mail game which involves the battle of survival between human and alien races. Players represent either a member of the human race or of the alien race with the universe as a setting. The game is played on a map of three parallel levels where each level is composed of 240 planetary systems. Each player must solve military and political problems within their own camp before war can be waged effectively against the opposing race. Each side is faced with the same situations and problems to overcome.

To order the rule book and take your first turn, please send \$5.00 or \$2.00 for book only with your name and address to

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T-TECH EXCHANGE. Free exchange of **MegaTraveller** ship, vehicle, robot, equipment de-

signs, etc. You send me yours, I'll send latest T-Tech package with designs from other participants. SASE for more info. No cost, no prices, just trade! T-Tech Exchange, C/O Philip Athans, 7783 Kensington Lane, Hanover Park, IL 60103. (39)

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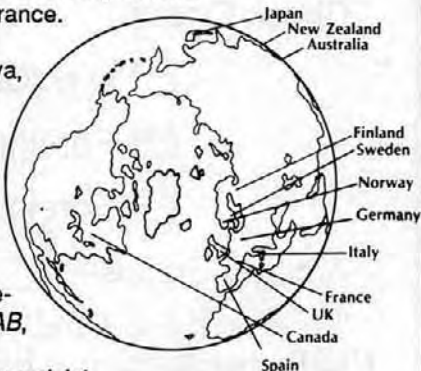


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YEAR



UPDATE

1639

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In an unexpected show of strength, the Combine military, under Theodore Kurita, stops the Federated Commonwealth invasion of 3039 cold.

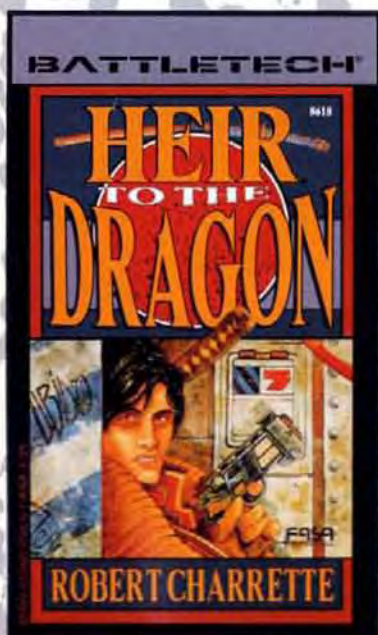
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HEIR TO THE DRAGON

A BATTLETECH Novel by Bob Charrette

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What follows is an odyssey through the back rooms and dark alleys that honeycomb the formidable houses of power in Combine space. It is Theodore Kurita's 20 year journey to power, and at every turn he must prove himself. Any misstep could prove fatal, not only to himself but to his people, his empire, and possibly the Inner Sphere.

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In **Temple of the Beastmen**, each player controls one of 10 adventurers, each with their own goals and special abilities, intent on rescuing slaves and treasures from the clutches of the wicked Martian king. Random map tile layout and card sequence make the temple, its treasures, and its dangers different with

every game. Stealth and strategy are essential to winning.

Temple of the Beastmen can be learned in under half an hour and can be played in under two hours. A well developed set of optional rules allows more elaborate strategies and lets you choose the level of complexity. Solitaire play is possible, and complete rules for it are provided.



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